Campus Crusade for Christ Library

CONSCIENCE

ITS ORIGIN AND AUTHORITY

PRESENTATION COPY.

CONSCIENCE

ITS ORIGIN AND AUTHORITY

BY THE

REV. G. L. RICHARDSON, M.A., B.D.

RECTOR OF BURTON LATIMER, NORTHANTS
LATE MAWSON SCHOLAR OF CORPUS CHRISTI, CAMBRIDGE

AUTHOR OF
LETTERS TO MEN, 'THE TEACHER'S LIFE OF CHRIST,' 'THE BIBLE IN BRIEF,' 'THE CHURCH LADS' RELIGION,' 'THE TRAVAIL OF HIS SOUL,' 'SERMONS FOR HARVEST,' 'CHILDREN IN CHURCH,' 'THE CHILDREN'S CHARTER,' 'OLD TESTAMENT STORIES,' 'THE SUNDAY GOSPELS'

'Conscience is one of the most important subjects in the whole of Ethics, and even in the whole of Theology.'—DORNER

LONDON
WELLS GARDNER, DARTON & CO., LTD.
3 & 4, PATERNOSTER BUILDINGS, E.C.
AND 44, VICTORIA STREET, S.W.

PRESENTATION COPY

1915

Campus Crusade for Christ Library

BJ
1471
R522
1915

INTRODUCTORY

THOSE who are interested in the study of Ethics, and particularly Christian Ethics in relation to Christian Theology, must have been disappointed at the cursory treatment which the Conscience has received at the hands of English writers. For the most part Ethical writers have left it to the Theologians, and Theologians have referred inquirers back to Ethics.

From the year 1660, when Jeremy Taylor published his *Ductor Dubitantium*, to the time when Joseph Butler preached his famous Sermons at the Rolls—they were first published in 1726—no one seems to have devoted serious attention to what may be called the theory of Conscience. And, as far as I am aware—in spite of the immense change that has taken place since the eighteenth century in our way of regarding man, the world, and GOD—no one since Butler has given more than passing attention to the subject.

Many people would agree with Professor Fowler that 'the terms Conscience and Moral Sense are very convenient expres-

11532

sions for popular use. . . . But the scientific moralist, in attempting to analyse the springs of moral action and to detect the ultimate sanctions of conduct, would do well to avoid these terms altogether.'* Yet it seems somewhat unmannerly to dismiss with a bow a word which brings with it such venerable credentials — which, in fact, has played such a great part in human life.

Granting, then, that the word stands for something—that, as Dorner says, 'Conscience is one of the most important subjects in the whole of Ethics, and even in the whole of Theology'—there would seem to be an excuse for trying to see one's way in what is confessedly a difficult path.

This Essay is not addressed to professed students of Ethics, Theology, or Metaphysics, but to the general reader who finds that the difficult problems connected with such studies are brought to a focus in his experience in the question of the origin and authority of Conscience. But reference will be made to standard authors on these subjects, in whose works anyone who is interested may pursue his inquiries for himself.

* Thomas Fowler, *Progressive Morality*, p. 32.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
	INTRODUCTORY	v
I.	CONSCIENCE AND MORALITY	1
II.	THE FACT OF CONSCIENCE	11
III.	CONSCIENCE AND NATURALISM	23
IV.	CONSCIENCE AND PERSONALITY	36
V.	SOME DEFINITIONS OF CONSCIENCE	48
VI.	DEFINITIONS OF CONSCIENCE COMPARED	60
VII.	CONSCIENCE NOT INFALLIBLE	70
VIII.	THE POSTULATE OF CONSCIENCE	77
IX.	AUTHORITY OF CONSCIENCE	92
X.	THE FUNCTION OF CONSCIENCE	104
XI.	THE MEANING OF OBLIGATION	117
XII.	CONSCIENCE AND THE NEW TESTAMENT	125
XIII.	CONSCIENCE, THE CHURCH, AND 'PUBLIC OPINION'	140
XIV.	CONSCIENCE IN RELATION TO SIN AND GRACE	152
XV.	CONSCIENCE AND SACRAMENTS	160
XVI.	CONSCIENCE AND CHRIST	169

CHAPTER		PAGE
XVII.	CONSCIENCE AND THE HOLY SPIRIT	182
XVIII.	THE DEVELOPMENT OF CONSCIENCE	195
XIX.	CONSCIENCE AND WAR	204
XX.	CONSCIENCE AND POLITICS	217
XXI.	CONSCIENCE AND TRADE	230
	SUMMARY	243

CONSCIENCE

ITS ORIGIN AND AUTHORITY

CHAPTER I

CONSCIENCE AND MORALITY

It is an outstanding example of the common-sense of English people that, although the foundations of Theology are questioned, the credentials of Morality have passed for the most part unchallenged—at least, in theory. The subject is treated as sacrosanct. Literature—which has been described as 'the expression of souls in revolt'—may from time to time repudiate current standards; but, speaking generally, novel teaching on morals has fallen in sterile soil, or lives an artificial and exotic life. The reason probably is that while 'common consent' can still be invoked to justify, or at least support, the current moral standards, it is felt to be foolish as well as dangerous to inquire too closely into the credentials of a tradition which has proved itself to have high social value. Yet it becomes year by year more questionable whether this large exception can be made;

whether morality—which is conduct, and therefore, as Matthew Arnold said, 'three-fourths of life'—can any more than Theology be exempted from the critical judgment. The fortress of Theistic belief still stands unconquered, in spite of the cannonading of the last century, but the number of its defenders has suffered some loss; and now the attempt is being made, by laying waste the field of Morality, to bring the long conflict to a close.

On the other hand, writers on Ethics are, for the most part, anxious to prove that Morals are secure on their own ground, and do not need the support of the religious sanctions; that there is a natural science of Ethics, which need not rest upon any theological postulate. Such moral axioms as the natural obligations of veracity, honest dealing, faithfulness in friendship, fidelity to promises, respect for human life—to which some would add respect for property—seem to carry with them the proof of their intrinsic authority. But the more strictly they are questioned, the more doubtful seems to be the law upon which their title-deeds depend. Ethics dissolve on analysis into an elaborate complex of customs which have proved useful to the race, as tending to preserve it and to bind the members of society into some kind of coherence. Even so, the Ethics of what we call our Western Civilisation is, after all,

a rather provincial affair: it only binds, even theoretically, that portion of mankind to which we are pleased to give the title of the progressive nations; it is avowedly rejected even in Europe by a school of thought which cannot be disregarded. Following this line of thought, it would appear that an entirely different system of morals—condemning what we approve, and approving what we condemn—might have been worked out in human society in the course of its evolution, and would have pressed upon the individual with the same binding—though fallacious—sense of obligation as that which we call the moral law imposes upon us.

Such considerations tend to the conclusion that Ethics and Theology must—at least for the Western type of mind—stand or fall together. To employ the weapons of Rationalism to undermine the one, and to think that at the same time you can maintain the other, is a pitiable and fatal delusion. This was felt rather than clearly seen by the protagonists in the battle which raged in England from about the year 1854. Thomas Huxley, in his essay on the 'Physical Basis of Life,' stated the case clearly when he said: 'The consciousness of this great truth weighs like a nightmare, I believe, upon many of the best minds of these days. They watch what they conceive to be the progress of materialism, in

such fear and powerless anger as a savage feels when, during an eclipse, the great shadow creeps over the face of the sun. The advancing tide of matter threatens to drown their souls; the tightening grasp of law impedes their freedom; they are alarmed lest man's moral nature be debased by the increase of his wisdom.'* Huxley, indeed, was splendidly inconsistent; his robust common-sense saved him. He clung to Morality, and to what he called 'the plain duty of each and all of us, as,' he said, 'a drowning sailor would cling to a hen-coop' —while denying that Morality was in a precarious condition. He thought that man had a Duty, and therefore stood on a rock, from which he could 'beat back the Cosmic process'—being apparently unaware that, according to his philosophy, he was as helpless as a man travelling in an express train at fifty miles an hour, who should endeavour, by pushing with all his strength at the walls of his compartment, to stop his inevitable progress. Admit that Huxley had the best of the battle with his 'clerical' antagonists, and that, of the Christian apologists, if five were wise, five were foolish; yet if reason was on the side of the attack, instinct was on the side of the defence. And instinct is usually a deeper and more enduring thing than reason; for while reason is (and must be) individualistic,

* T. H. Huxley, *Lectures and Essays*, 1868.

instinct is social; and the group has a consciousness of disintegrating forces which is sometimes wanting in its most brilliant members.

Taking the words Ethics and Theology, in their broadest sense, as the theory of Morality and Religion, we may say that, while they are always found in conjunction, the latter is more instinctive and deeply rooted than the former. 'Go back,' says a recent writer, 'to the darkest roots of civilisation, and you will find them knotted round some sacred stone, or encircling some sacred well.'*

The question, it must be noted, is not whether a man who is without any Theistic belief can be what we call a moral man. There are, of course, many such, whose lives put those of many nominal Christians to shame. Most of us act from instincts which we absorb or inherit, from a complex of influences which we call our environment, which unconsciously mould our inner life. Many fight manfully in the ranks of Morality who have severed themselves from the base of Religion. The danger is lest the enemy, by an enveloping movement, will succeed in isolating the unsupported battalion. This danger was suspected fifty years ago; to-day it is imminent. Whatever refinements may be made by philosophers in the study, it is well for the

* G. K. Chesterton, *Orthodoxy*.

plain man to face the fact that for him Religion and Morality will ultimately stand or fall together; that there is no assault delivered against the one which cannot be made with equal effect upon the other.

An illustration from current controversy will make this clear. All Englishmen are agreed that Morality is of such vital importance that ethical principles must be taught in our elementary schools. Even Mr. R. Blatchford says that those principles which, after searching examination, are proved true should 'be taught in the schools.'* And Mr. F. J. Gould has framed an admirable set of moral instructions for school use on such subjects as self-control, modesty, and truthfulness.† Can these things be taught permanently without a theological postulate, or at least a religious atmosphere? Youth is quick-witted, and we are training the children to question everything. We have been told lately that 'the age is asking questions.' But it is the *children* who are now, as always, asking questions; and the teacher is, as always, hard put to it to answer them. The moral teacher says: 'You should control yourself; you must be temperate and truthful.' The boy who has been brought up in the 'secular' atmosphere will put the old question: 'Why?—My grandfather was

* R. Blatchford, *God and my Neighbour.*
† F. J. Gould, *Children's Book of Moral Lessons.*

taught to fear hell; my father feared the policeman: shall I fear a set of rules which have been drawn up by what you call society to stop me from doing what I like? You keep on saying that it will be better for society if I am truthful and honest and self-controlled. What does that matter to me, if it causes me pain and trouble now? When you tell me that I *ought* to act thus and not otherwise, will you kindly explain what you mean? If the other people have made rules for me for *their* convenience, why should I not break them for my own? I seem to remember something I learned when I went to Sunday-school: "JESUS I know, and Paul I know, but who are ye?"' It seems too probable that the boy who is possessed by the secular spirit will leap upon the defenceless moral teachers and overcome them, so that they flee out of the school-house naked and wounded. If the teacher can only commend his teaching on the ground of his personal opinion, there is no standard of reference when his opinion differs from that of those whom he teaches; but if he can appeal to 'the eternal and enduring Laws of GOD, which are not of to-day or yesterday,' he invokes an authority which binds alike the teacher and the taught; the moral law is felt to flow from a Source which gives it a universal validity.

Martensen reasons from a somewhat dif-

ferent and perhaps more fundamental standpoint, which is also the *point d'appui* of T. H. Green in his *Prolegomena to Ethics*—viz., that the very idea of human personality, when deeply investigated, demands the existence of a Divine Personality as its source and goal. 'The basis of the moral is the idea of the religious moral, which in its principle embraces the whole of humanity, interweaves the life of man in GOD with his whole life in the world; and only from this *theonomic* point of view can we understand the phenomena of good and evil in the life of man, the inmost nature of which falls outside the horizon of the *autonomic* system of ethics.'*

Mr. A. J. Balfour, in his recent Gifford Lectures, has given the theological postulate an even wider extension by arguing that not only Ethics, but also Art and Science, depend ultimately for their validity upon the concept of GOD.†

It might appear that, while the struggle is waged between the spiritual and determinist views of life and destiny, the conscience—like the sacred ark of the Israelites—has not been taken into the battle. Its claims, though often practically ignored, in theory are recognised as valid; its authority

* H. Martensen, *Christian Ethics*, p. 346 (T. and T. Clark).

† See also *Foundations of Belief*, pp. 36 *et seq.* (1906 Ed.).

is still admitted as a final court. To this every preacher and every moral teacher makes his appeal; and the appeal is felt to have force. To question this inward authority is still felt, almost without exception, to be an impiety; if this be taken from us, then far more is lost than a controversial battle; 'Ichabod' will be written across the story of our moral life: for in truth 'the glory will have departed' from it.

That conscience is a central fact in the moral life of man; that it exists and must be reckoned with; that it is the authority to which men of all creeds and parties appeal, is obvious. The 'passive resister'—however mistakenly—rested his case on conscience; the anti-vaccinationist has even had his 'conscientious scruple'—however anti-social—recognised in law; a priest who claims the sanction of conscience finds multitudes of sympathisers in defying ecclesiastical authority; an act of barbarity or treachery committed by Turk or Teuton will rouse the 'Christian conscience' to such an extent as to justify a European war. Men differ widely in their estimate of what conscience enjoins and what it forbids; but the statement that conscience ought to be obeyed would carry a unanimous vote—at present—in any assembly. As Dr. J. N. Figgis says, any doctrine which would 'destroy the springs of spiritual life in the individual conscience'

would be disastrous to civic as well as to religious life.* And no one would quarrel with his statement that Churchmen ought to have a conscience, and that it is the province of all who are teachers in the Church to awaken this conscience.

It may be, as Rothe said, that to frame a really complete doctrine of the conscience is so difficult as to be impossible; yet some consideration of the fact of conscience, what it stands for, and whence comes its sanction, may indicate a method of viewing from a practical standpoint the problems associated with the great truths of morality and religion.

* J. N. Figgis, *Churches in the Modern State.*

CHAPTER II

THE FACT OF CONSCIENCE

That conscience exists, and that it is felt to possess a great if undefined authority, is attested by the facts of life. If we try to imagine a human being entirely devoid of conscience, we find that it is inconceivable; we have eliminated just that quality by which we can predicate humanity of man. A being who was capable of feeling neither regret nor remorse, in whom deliberate cruelty excited no abhorrence, to whom pity made no appeal, in whose sight moral good and evil were as indifferent as patterns of wall-paper, must be either sub-human or super-human, either brute or devil. But it is not so generally recognised that conscience is really the centre of interest in human affairs; the pivot on which the interest, whether of drama or history, turns; the salt without which the story would lose its savour.

Yet a little reflection would prove that this is the case. The tragedies of the great dramatists 'purge the mind with pity and terror' precisely because they display the conscience at work, and appeal to the same quality in the spectator of the drama.

Sophocles' tragedy of *Œdipus Tyrannus*, as far as the framework of the story is concerned, is a crude and savage business, which might have been imagined by a drunken butcher in a fit of delirium. A man murders his father; marries his own mother; by the incestuous union has children who are at once his sisters and his daughters; and in the last scene appears upon the stage disfigured with blood, his eyes put out by his own hand to hide from him the horror upon which he dare not look. Such a story may make an appeal to primitive instincts, as the killing of a pig fascinates the boy in the back-street. But on what grounds does it rank, in the hands of the Athenian, as a masterpiece? We are told that it shows us ourselves caught in the inexorable web of destiny. But

> This judgment of the heavens, that makes us tremble,
> Touches us not with pity.

Is it, then, the unconsciousness of the chief actor in the drama which moves our tears? the contrast between what the king is saying and the real meaning of his words as they are understood by the reader or spectator who knows the terrible secret? Is it this so-called irony of Sophocles which accounts for the power of the tragedy?

No doubt pity for the unconscious

parricide mingles with the terror inspired by the 'evil net' of Doom which encloses him.

ὦ φῶς, τελευταῖόν σε προσβλέψαιμι νῦν
ὅστις πέφασμαι φύς τ' ἀφ' ὧν οὐ χρῆν, ξὺν οἷς τ'
οὐ χρῆν μ' ὁμιλῶν, οὕς τέ μ' οὐκ ἔδει κτανών.

But we must dig deeper. Though the Greeks had as yet no word for conscience, the thing is there, palpable and central. It is as though Sophocles were saying:

The play's the thing
By which to catch the conscience of the King.

It is in the theatre of the soul that the real tragedy lies. The Erinnyes which haunt him are the messengers of conscience; he is stricken with remorse because he feels guilty and in need of purification, though pure reason would seem to exonerate him from blame. His cry is akin to that of another soul in agony: 'The good that I would I do not, but the evil that I would not, that I do. O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?' And though Œdipus knows nothing of 'the law of the spirit of life' which delivers from 'the law of sin and death' (see Rom. viii. 2), yet his problem hints at the necessity and possibility of an atonement. In the *Coloneus* the fear of the Erinnyes is past; they are now to him the kind goddesses, 'sweet

daughters of old Night.' 'By an inward enlightenment, following upon his sufferings, his nature is purified, and he looks onward with a good hope that is yet full of awe.'

If we say, with Dewey and Tufts, that 'conscience is a standing habit of mind which reflects on one's own behaviour in relation to the existing order,' then it is clear that the Greek conceptions of Nemesis (Νέμεσις) and Aidos (Αἰδώς) in their interaction give us the very thing to which we apply the word 'conscience.' That the concept was not unfamiliar to Plato is shown in the speech of Cephalus in the *Republic*: 'Thou must know, Socrates, that when man believes death near, there is awakened in him a fear and anxiety to which he was before a stranger. The well-known traditions about the infernal regions, where everyone shall suffer punishment for the wrong he has committed while here, and which he before considered absurd, begin now to distress his soul as if they were really true, and he casts now a deeper glance into that world, either from the weakness of old age, or because he is now closer to it. Full of fear and anxiety, he now begins to reflect, and examine if he have wronged anyone. He who finds many trespasses in his life is constantly frightened from sleep; like a child he trembles, and passes his life in sorrowful forebodings; whilst on the other hand he who is not

conscious of any wrong is always accompanied by a joyous and beautiful hope, which, as Pindar says, is the foster-mother of old age.'

Martensen, who quotes this passage in *Christian Ethics,* remarks: 'To this terror of the future here described we can assign no other place in the soul than the conscience. It is the warning conscience which, as consciousness of eternity, awakens thoughts concerning retribution and the dread of the future in those who at an earlier period mocked at the traditions of the infernal regions. It is from a good conscience that this joyful hope and expectation spring.'

Greek Tragedy and Greek Philosophy thus anticipate the weighty words of Bishop Butler where he says: 'There is a superior principle of reflection or conscience in every man, which distinguishes between the internal principles of his heart as well as his external actions; which passes judgment upon himself and them; pronounces determinately some actions to be in themselves just, right, good; others to be in themselves evil, wrong, unjust: which without being consulted, without being advised with, magisterially exercises itself, and approves or condemns him the doer of them accordingly, and which, if not forcibly stopped, naturally and always of course goes on *to anticipate a higher and more effectual sen-*

tence, which shall hereafter second and affirm its own.'

If we turn from the Greek authors to the records of the Hebrew people, we shall find that the fact of conscience is even more fundamental to their thought. The word συνείδησις does not occur in the Old Testament, except in the LXX translation of Eccles. x. 20, where it corresponds, as Davison has pointed out, more nearly to what we call 'inner-consciousness' than to a moral sense of the word. But conscience is assumed and implied throughout, and gives the living interest to the legends and history which constitute to the modern reader—whether he be orthodox or heretic—the human ground of their appeal. The narratives which are the least theological in their tone, and which show no marks of re-editing by the priestly redactor, bring out the fact of conscience in the clearest light. The story of Joseph is a drama of the conscience. The brothers are swayed by jealousy of 'the lad,' which is stirred by a certain priggishness in Joseph and an unwise favouritism in Jacob. Their jealousy hardens into envy and contempt, from which it is a short step to hatred and the intent to kill. One of the brethren feels the strivings of conscience, though he disguises it under the pretext of utility: 'What profit if we slay our brother and conceal his blood?' Later in the narrative

we see conscience again at work: 'And they said one to another, We are verily guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the anguish of his soul, when he besought us, and we would not hear; therefore is this distress come upon us.' And conscience speaks most clearly in the wonderful appeal of Judah on behalf of 'the little one,' Benjamin: 'Now therefore when I come to thy servant my father, and the lad is not with us; seeing that his life is bound up in the lad's life; it shall come to pass, when he seeth that the lad is not with us, that he will die. . . . Now therefore, I pray thee, let thy servant abide instead of the lad a bondman to my lord; and let the lad go up with his brethren. For how shall I go up to my father, and the lad be not with me?'

Conscience, indeed, is not always sustained at this high level. We are frequently astonished at what it forbids and what it enjoins. Often it appears to rise no higher than contemporary tribal morality. While the individual has a sense of obligation to the tribe, his conscience seems to make no protest against deeds of treachery and savagery inflicted on enemies outside. There are two predominant instincts at work, as Professor Westphal has pointed out: (1) The sense of nationality, and (2) the instinct of self-preservation. Yet in such primitive tribal instincts we see the conscience, like a tender plant, gaining

a foothold: 'the individual conscience is only gradually evolved out of the national'; but it brings its contribution, which is a vital thing, to the inchoate tribal consciousness from which it draws, by assimilation of many elements, its impulsive strength. 'Jehovism . . . brings back upon earth, to bless it, the true religion, the religion of conscience. And consequently the Decalogue, the charter of this religion, makes the whole of worship itself rest upon a fact of conscience, which distinguishes Israel from other nations and makes it the revealer of true adoration.'* And again: 'The Decalogue founded the Theocracy. And the history of the Theocracy shows us the collective self-interest of the nation, after long labour, giving birth to an *individual conscience*—that is, a *moral* being capable of repentance, conversion, and salvation.'

In the great prophetic writings of the eighth century B.C. conscience stands revealed as a sacrosanct authority—an authority exercised by the prophet, recognised by the people. 'The prophets were an embodied conscience to a fickle and rebellious people. Their words penetrated through the apathy, frivolity, sensuality, and hardness of heart, which characterised Israel through many generations.'† 'To

* Westphal, *The Law and the Prophets*, p. 175.
† Davison, *The Christian Conscience*, p. 116.

what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? saith the LORD. When ye come to appear before Me, who hath required this at your hands, to tread My courts? Bring no more vain oblations. . . . When ye spread forth your hands to Me, I will hide Mine eyes from you; yea, when ye make many prayers I will not hear: your hands are full of blood. Wash you, make you clean: put away the evil of your doings from before Mine eyes; cease to do evil, learn to do well. . . . Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD.'*

The development of the concept as well as the fact of conscience in the New Testament will be brought out at a later stage of the argument, when we shall have to consider the bearing of the fact and doctrine of the Incarnation upon it. Meanwhile we are considering it, as far as possible, apart from Theology, as an outstanding feature of human experience.

And it will not be denied that as it is the vital factor in Greek drama and philosophy, and in Hebrew story, so it occupies a central place in the tragedies which the world counts great—*e.g.*, in Shakespeare's *Lear*, *Macbeth*, and *Hamlet*. The first might be called the drama of the filial conscience, the second of the remorseful conscience, the third of the doubting or scrupulous conscience. It is not too much to say that

* Isa. i. 10 *et seq.*

without conscience, expressed or implied, the nerve of the action would cease to thrill. But it is in *Richard III.* that what is implicit in the other dramas comes explicitly into the open. A character is unfolded which—whether in any respect historical or no lies outside our inquiry—is, as far as the author can imagine it, devoid of conscience. With 'nothing to back him but,' as he says, 'the plain devil and dissembling looks,' Richard hews his way to the throne 'with the bloody axe.' He murders those who stand in his way with the Oriental callousness of a Jehu or an Ahab. His young cousins, Clarence, Prince Edward, are swept from his path; Buckingham is used and thrown aside; Anne is cajoled, married, and deserted; and the power of his hatred and ambition seems to bear him up on their wings like fallen angels. But conscience is kept down by the powerful will, not destroyed. The recoil of the spring will correspond to the pressure exercised to keep it down. And in the Tent-scene on Bosworth Field we have conscience revealed as a man's ideal self struggling in agony against the man as he has made himself:

> O coward conscience, how dost thou affect me!
> The lights burn blue. It is now dead midnight.
> Cold fearful drops stand on my trembling flesh.
> What, do I fear myself? There's none else by:
> Richard loves Richard; that is, I am I.
> Is there a murderer here? No; yes—I am.

Then fly. What, from myself Great reason why—
Lest I revenge. What, myself upon myself?
Alack, I love myself. Wherefore? For any good
That I myself have done unto myself?
Oh no: alas, I rather hate myself
For hateful deeds committed by myself!
I am a villain: yet I lie; I am not.
Fool, of thyself speak well! Fool, do not flatter!
My conscience hath a thousand several tongues,
And every tongue brings in a several tale,
And every tale condemns me for a villain.
Perjury, perjury, in the highest degree:
Murder, stern murder, in the direst degree;
All several sins, all used in each degree,
Throng to the bar, crying all—Guilty, guilty!

Because he feels the stings of conscience, Richard remains, in spite of his crimes, a human being. And there is perhaps a hint that the coming death may strike out, with the clash of swords, a spark of divinity which shall discover the soul: the Divine Mercy may be revealed in the pitilessness of battle:

There is no *creature* loves me,
And if I die, no soul shall pity me.
Nay, wherefore should they, since that I myself
Find in myself no pity to myself?

There may be a suggestion here of the thought which Robert Browning worked out in *The Ring and the Book*, where the Pope says, in sanctioning the execution of Guido:

For the main criminal I have no hope
Except in such a suddenness of fate.
So may the truth be flashed out at one blow,
And Guido see, one instant, and be saved.

When we turn from literature as expressed in the drama, which is the mirror of life, to our personal experience of life itself, the same fact confronts us: conscience is central. We are constantly in situations where we have to form an estimate and pass at least an interior judgment on the motives of our fellow-men. We have to trade with so-and-so; to lend, or more probably to borrow, money; to enter into a partnership; to engage a curate; to decide upon a school for one's children; to be security for a friend; to follow a political leader. One thing we require in borrower, lender, partner, curate, schoolmaster, friend. If we are satisfied that he habitually tries to regulate his actions according to the dictates of conscience, we are as sure as we can be of anything in the world that we shall not be deceived in him. We distrust the man who talks about his conscience, for it is not a thing to be advertised or bought or sold. It is as sacred a thing as love, and

> That love is merchandised whose rich esteeming
> Its owner's self doth publish everywhere.

But each man knows in his heart that 'a conscience void of offence' would lift his life into the untroubled peace of which we dream; it is a shrine where oracles are heard which make us tremble or rejoice.

CHAPTER III

CONSCIENCE AND NATURALISM

We have been busy for half a century studying origins. Since *The Origin of Species* set the world thinking, we have felt that nothing can be known apart from its origin. This method of inquiry has been triumphantly the path of progress. A new group of sciences has arisen, following upon the general acceptance of the doctrine of Evolution. Modern Chemistry has enabled the astronomer to trace the story of the physical cosmos to its beginning, and to behold from his observatory the birth or the ruin of a world. Animal life is studied in Embryology, and the process is pushed back to the protoplasmic cell. Bacteriology reveals, that it may make war upon, the microbes of disease. Geology, dissatisfied with the beauty of the earth, which is but skin-deep, strips off layer after layer to discover the secret of its age and the anatomy of its frame. Anthropology studies the survival of savage—and presumably primitive—tribes, their weapons and brain-development, as a key to the problems of a later civilisation. Compara-

tive Religion seeks to trace to a primitive unity the multiplicity of creeds. Psychology and Sociology, yet in their infancy, would aim at a similar synthesis for individuals and nations, by investigating the laws of the mind and the laws which govern the evolution of States; though as yet, it may be admitted, Sociology (like Meteorology) is an uncertain prophet of the weather.

The basis upon which this imposing edifice has been reared is assumed to be the theory of Naturalism. Philosophy and Metaphysic having been tried and found wanting, Empiricism has been somewhat hastily taken as the only available source of real knowledge. 'Verification is the test of truth' has been its dogma; and the tautology has been hailed as an utterance of the deepest wisdom. But the theory which has been so successful in explaining phenomena seems to halt and stumble when it attempts to explain us to ourselves. The conclusions of Naturalism are inevitable—and intolerable. Everything is explained, and the explanation empties the cosmos of all significance.

> It is a tale
> Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
> Signifying nothing.

It is when we question Naturalism as to the account it can give of the origin of ethics that its weakness becomes for the first time

apparent. Here we are only concerned with the Naturalistic account of the origin of conscience; but as conscience is the most indisputable and the most important fact in any theory of ethics, it is here that the issue must be faced.

What account, then, does Naturalism give of the origin of conscience? We must distinguish between logical and complete Naturalism, which has been worked out into the theory of Determinism, and what may conveniently be called Evolutionary or Ethical Naturalism. Not all 'Naturalists' would push its conclusions with rigour into the ethical sphere, but the 'extreme' section shows the direction in which the 'moderates' are being forced to move.

Thoroughgoing or logical Determinism 'has connected completely and indissolubly, as far as observation can carry us, mind with matter. . . . Firstly, it has established a functional relation to exist between every fact of thinking, willing, or feeling, on the one side, and some molecular change in the body on the other side. Secondly, it has connected, through countless elusive stages, this organic human body with the universal lifeless matter. And, thirdly, it claims to have placed the universal matter itself in a new position for us, and to exhibit all forms of life as developed from it, through its own spontaneous motion. Thus for the first time, beyond the reach of ques-

tion, the entire sensible universe is brought within the scope of the physicist. . . . Nature is nothing more than a vast automaton; and man, with all his ways and works, is simply a part of Nature, and can, by no device of thought, be detached from or set above it. . . . Matter existed and fermented long before the evolution of mind. . . . Mental facts are therefore essentially dependent on molecular facts; molecular facts are not dependent upon mental. They are as much the outcome of molecular groupings and movements as the figures in a kaleidoscope are of the groupings and movements of the coloured bits of glass.'*

Such a statement, which, when it was written in 1879, seemed to many readers an extravagant presentment of the creed of Naturalism, is accepted with enthusiasm by the Determinist of to-day. He is willing to pay the price of being an 'automaton'; for thus he shakes off at a stroke the fetters of accountability to GOD, responsibility to man, and the fears of conscience.

Conscience has been found out, and its petulant upbraidings may be ignored. For what is conscience, considered in the light (or rather in the darkness) of its origin? It is one of the ingenious natural contrivances worked out in the course of man's adaptation to his environment, by which certain results advantageous to society rather than to the

* W. H. Mallock, *Is Life Worth Living?*

individual have been secured. It was born of an unethical union of Fear and Authority —fear of the Tribe, including its departed members; and the Authority of the old men, among whom the priests were important, working upon this fear, and exploiting it for Tribal purposes, when the individual will was in conflict with social utility. So far from inspiring us with any sense of reverence, the more we examine its real nature, the more it is likely to awaken in us irritation and disgust. Upon examination, we find that Schopenhauer's analysis is correct: conscience is 'one-fifth fear of man, one-fifth superstition, one-fifth prejudice, one-fifth vanity, one-fifth custom.'* We turn conscience out of the witness-box—for how shall such a ragged tramp, a thing of shreds and patches, speak the truth? We place it in the dock, and we find that conscience is not only an unreliable witness, but a felon. Its rôle has been that of the 'decoy' bullock in the Chicago slaughter-houses, who beguiles his fellows to their doom. It has led men into a death-trap under the pretence of being a guide. Those who have unwittingly followed where it led have been delivered unprotected to the tender mercies of the evolutionary process. They have no chance in the struggle; they have been fooled and betrayed.

Hence arises a passionate revolt against

* Quoted by Davison, *The Christian Conscience.*

conscience and the things which conscience commends for our acceptance. Humility, forgiveness of injuries, mercy, truth—what are they? They are contrivances to rob us of our natural desires for liberty and satisfaction. To be cajoled or terrified by them argues weakness, which is the only unpardonable sin. Man has been mesmerised by the pale image of the Galilean. At last it is seen that Strength alone is entitled to the name of Virtue—which indeed is its real meaning. There is no God but this, and Nietzsche is his prophet. Hence we have the Gospel of Will, of Strength, of the Super-man; and the ideals of Christianity are loathed and hated.

As we look at the creature we have conjured up, we are aware of a feeling of repulsion. What will the super-man be like when he appears? 'Nature,' says Sir Leslie Stephen, 'if I may use that convenient personification for things considered as a part of a continuous system, wants big, strong, hearty, eupeptic, shrewd, sensible human beings, and would be grossly inconsistent if she bestowed her highest reward of happiness on a bilious, knock-kneed saint, merely because he had objections to adultery, drunkenness, murder, and robbery, an utter absence of malice, or even highly cultivated sympathies.'* The coming Lord of the world,

* Sir Leslie Stephen, *Science of Ethics*.

then, will have the inestimable blessing of an unimpaired digestion, which will nourish with rich blood a brain powerful and quick to perceive its own immediate advantage in whatsoever circumstances may confront him. The jaw will probably be well developed; the neck thick enough to give room for the arteries upon which the rapidity of brain-work depends. The creature is *ex hypothesi* an Egoist, and has no scruples in utilising to the full the advantages of which he is possessed: he will wage war without passion and without chivalry; he will engage in trade with an admirable ruthlessness.

It may be that the cosmic process is evolving such a type; it is so in fact, for there are not wanting instances to prove it. But is it the true line of evolutionary ascent, or is it a mere 'sport,' a reversion to something sub-human, a half-forgotten stage which humanity had, we hoped, passed in 'working out the beast'? We are aware at least of something lacking in such a 'human being,' whose faculties, under various 'moral' disguises, resolve themselves on analysis into nothing but *force* and *cunning*. It may be the 'blond beast' of Nietzsche, but it is not, emphatically, what we mean by man. We are taught that conscience is a kind of moral appendix—an organ presumably useful in some distant age, but without any

present significance. We are assured that it causes discomfort of which we may as well be free, and are advised to go to Determinism for its removal. But we find that the surgeon has diagnosed the case incorrectly: he is removing the pancreas under the mistaken notion that he has got the appendix; and something vital is leaving us. Deprived of conscience man is no longer human.

Writers on Ethics, to do them justice, have not been slow to perceive the slippery slope along which Naturalism hurries them, and have endeavoured to apply the brake, or to side-track the car before it reaches the precipice; and the shrieking of the machine bears witness to their anxiety. They maintain that, as conscience admittedly exists as a fact, it will continue to occupy a place in human nature, whatever theory we may hold of its origin. It is imperative that Ethics—which here means, generally speaking, the type of morality approved by Christian sentiment—should be shown to have a solid basis, apart from the 'supernatural sanctions' which the ethical philosopher rejects. The evolutionary process must be forced, therefore, to yield an ethical result.

To achieve this Herbert Spencer bends his energies in his *Data of Ethics*. But though he doubtless satisfied himself, it is doubtful whether he satisfies his readers.

His faith in individualism, and his resolute optimism, carried him through; combined with his adherence to the dogma that acquired characters are inherited—a dogma which has been considerably shaken by the investigations of Weismann and others. M. Bergson goes so far as to say: 'If Spencer had begun by putting to himself the question of the hereditability of acquired characters, his evolutionism would no doubt have taken an altogether different form. If (as seems probable to us) a habit contracted by the individual were transmitted to its descendants only in very exceptional cases, all the Spencerian psychology would need remaking, and a large part of Spencer's philosophy would fall to pieces.'* And Henry Sidgwick states his criticism of Spencer in the emphatic phrase: 'According to me an ethical end cannot be proved by biology.'†

How does Spencer seek to prove his thesis, which is so fundamental to his ethical system? He argues thus: 'The sentiments and ideas current in each society become adjusted to the kinds of activity predominating in it. A life of constant external enmity generates a code in which aggression, conquest, revenge, are inculcated, while peaceful occupations are repro-

* Henri Bergson, *Creative Evolution.*

† Sidgwick, *The Ethics of Green, Spencer, and Martineau.*

bated. Conversely, a life of settled internal unity generates a code inculcating the virtues conducive to harmonious co-operation—justice, honesty, veracity, regard for others' claims. And the implication is that, if the life of internal amity continues unbroken from generation to generation, there must result, not only the appropriate code, but the appropriate moral nature—a moral sense adapted to the moral requirements. Men so conditioned will acquire to the degree needful for complete guidance that *innate conscience* which the intuitive moralists erroneously suppose to be possessed by mankind at large.'* And again: 'In their proper times and places and proportions, the moral sentiments will guide men just as spontaneously and adequately as do now the sensations.'†

For this 'consummation devoutly to be wished Spencer relies on the law of the association of ideas. Obligation 'originates from experience of those several forms of restraint that have established themselves in the course of civilisation—the political, religious, and social. . . . Emerging as the moral motive does but slowly from amidst the political, religious, and social motives, it long participates in that consciousness of subordination to some external agency which is joined with them;

* H. Spencer, *Inductions of Ethics*, Part II., chap. xiv.
† H. Spencer, *Data of Ethics*, p. 111.

and only as it becomes distinct and predominant does it lose this associated consciousness—only then does the feeling of obligation fade. This remark implies the tacit conclusion, which will be to most very startling, that the sense of duty or moral obligation is transitory, and will diminish as fast as moralisation increases.'*

According to this theory, conscience—which certainly involves the idea of moral obligation—is in not much better case than we saw it to be on the assumptions of thoroughgoing Naturalism. If in the good time coming conscience is

> to fade away,
> Melting in the light of day,

it is hardly worth while to take pains to prove that it has its roots in evolutionary ethics. The sooner it disappears, the sooner we shall be satisfied that we are making moral progress! We shall test our character by the diminution of conscience, not, as heretofore, by its growing claims. But, not to comment further on what Professor Sidgwick calls Mr. Spencer's 'irrepressible and unwarrantable optimism,' 'a settled state of unity' does not appear to generate spontaneously all the virtues he enumerates.† Unchecked individualism and competitive industrialism are not

* H. Spencer, *Data of Ethics*, chap. vii.
† See above, p. 32.

exactly leading us to a new Jerusalem—a heaven and earth wherein dwelleth righteousness. Newspaper Trusts, the big Railway Combine, the Monopoly of Industry, do not point to shining vistas of blessedness. The industrial machine is not turning out an increasing supply of 'justice, honesty, veracity, and regard for others' claims.' And if we ask the question propounded by Bishop d'Arcy, 'Can the theory of Evolution, as presented by Darwin, Spencer, and others, be made the basis of a theory of Ethics?' we shall be compelled to agree with his conclusion: 'The answer to this question seems to be a decided negative.'*

Thus far our inquiry has reached a negative, but not an unimportant, position, viz., that conscience cannot be explained on principles of logical Determinism or evolutionary Ethics. The one finds in conscience nothing but a useless, and in fact harmful, survival of an old Tribal instinct of Fear and Authority. The other makes a futile attempt to educe the moral by an evolutionary process from the non-moral. Of this it would be enough to say that you will never get out of the evolutionary process what was not at least implicitly contained in it from the beginning; it is only a trick of philosophical *legerdemain* to appear to get something out of nothing.

* C. F. D'Arcy, *Short Study of Ethics.*

It follows that conscience is not due to natural causes only. The account which Naturalism gives of its origin may have an historical, but has no ethical, interest. It has no authority. 'A sentiment,' as Sidgwick says, 'regarded as imported by Association, and destined soon to disappear, cannot coerce us much.'* And conscience stripped of authority is but the ghost of a murdered King 'revisiting the glimpses of the moon,' but unable to do more than 'make night hideous.'

* H. Sidgwick, *op. cit.*

CHAPTER IV

CONSCIENCE AND PERSONALITY

THE preceding chapter has brought out the fact that we cannot get an adequate theory of Conscience out of Naturalism or Evolutionary Ethics. 'If the destructive action of Naturalism,' says Rudolf Eucken, 'is not fully realised, it is owing to the fact that it usually supplements its deficiencies secretly by means of a stock of thoughts which belong to the world of Idealism. Thus it is accustomed to hold fast to an ethical estimate of action; in practical life it usually retains without hesitation its hold on such things as duty and honour, justice and humanity, though in the world built by its own conceptions there is not the smallest place for them. . . . But the more the consequences of Naturalism are developed, the more intolerable must it find this dualism, the more inclined will it be to reject these supplements as impossible, and *the more plainly must its limits be seen, and likewise its inability to guide life.*'* This contradiction between the naturalistic premises and the ethical conclusion was

* R. Eucken, *The Life of the Spirit.*

trenchantly exposed as long ago as 1895 by Mr. Arthur Balfour in his *Foundations of Belief*, where he truly described the ethico-naturalistic philosopher as a *parasite* —drawing spiritual sustenance from a body of belief which theoretically he repudiated.

Further investigation has shown that we cannot invoke 'the blessed word' Evolution as confidently as of old. For it 'rests on the presupposition that movement starts from a fixed point and makes sure progress towards its goal; that any doubt which may arise only concerns details, and cannot call in question the movement as a whole. . . . [But] the present state of opinion, with its complete uncertainty as to the final aims of man and the meaning of his existence, is sufficient proof that doubt does extend to the whole. . . . Hence only one way is left, viz., to understand and treat the spiritual life as an independent world; thus only can we hope to win a content for our life and save it from the nothingness into which otherwise it irretrievably sinks.'*

We are therefore bidden, if we would win 'significance, value, and happiness, for human existence,' to 'return to the problem of an independent spiritual life superior to the mere man.'†

Henri Bergson summons philosophy to the same quest: 'A philosophy of intuition

* R. Eucken, *op. cit.* † *Ibid.*

will be sooner or later swept away by science if it does not resolve to see the life of the body just where it really is, on the road that leads to the life of the spirit. . . . Philosophy introduces us into the spiritual life, and it shows us at the same time the relation of the life of the spirit to that of the body.'* Philosophy is to advance to this high task relying on Intuition, which is greater and more fundamental than Intellect; for 'Intuition is mind itself, and in a certain sense life itself: the Intellect has been cut out of it by a process resembling that which has generated matter.'†

It may be doubted whether philosophy can achieve so much. It may show us that spiritual life is intelligible and a reality—possibly the only reality. But it cannot, even by Intuition, 'introduce us' into it. The spiritual life may be *explained* by philosophy, but it *resides* in personality itself. 'Spiritual life,' unless it is taken as the equivalent of the doctrine of the Indwelling God, may easily come to signify merely the emotions appropriate to morality, or even may become a phrase with no real content.

When we interrogate conscience, we are aware that we are touching a nerve of the spiritual life; we thrill to something which we cannot doubt to be part of us. We shall perhaps find reason to believe that

* H. Bergson, *Creative Evolution.* † *Ibid.*

conscience is our whole personality acting ethically. At least we shall have a better chance of deciding what we mean by conscience if we endeavour to examine it, not in isolation, but in reference to the problem of personality.

Though personality is a mystery, it is a mystery of which every one of us is directly conscious. 'To men of a speculative turn come sweet yet awful hours when in wonder and fear you ask yourself: "Who am I—the thing that can say 'I'?" The world with its loud trafficking retires into the distance; and through the paper-hangings and stone-walls and thick-plied tissues of Commerce and Polity . . . wherewith your existence sits surrounded, the sight reaches forth into the void Deep, and you are alone with the Universe and silently commune with it, as one mysterious Presence with another.'* This is a fact of experience which anyone may verify for himself, if he will (as Butler phrases it), 'sit down in a calm hour' to reflect. You may not arrive at the vivid consciousness of Newman, who said that there were to him only 'two luminously self-evident facts'—his soul and God. But you will approximate to it. And it involves the consciousness, or intuition, that personality is extra- or super-temporal; it is not a phenomenon of the time-series. It *manifests itself* in Time and

* T. Carlyle, *Sartor Resartus.*

Space. And as it is *moving*, not fixed—which is what we mean by duration—so it is *conditioned* by body, which gives it a home, or at least a lodging. But personality is greater than, and logically independent of, our consciousness of it. It is supernatural, in the sense that it is essentially a spiritual, not a material, thing. The brain has not developed consciousness, as Huxley thought, as a kind of by-product; the brain is the point where the personality gets into contact with the material world. (The intellect was developed for this practical purpose.*) But 'the self-conscious subject is not in space and time, because it is conscious of space and time. Space and time presuppose it. . . . The subject is the ultimate unit by reference to which every element has existence.'† Or, as T. H. Green expresses it: 'If by nature we mean the object of possible experience, the connected order of knowable facts or phenomena—and this is what our men of science mean when they trace the natural genesis of human character—then nature implies something other than itself, as the condition of its being what it is. Of that something else we are entitled to say, positively, that it is a self-distinguishing consciousness. . . . The relation of events to each other as in time implies their equal presence to a subject which is not in time.

* See H. Bergson, *op. cit.* † D'Arcy, *Ethics.*

There could be no such thing as time if there were not a self-consciousness which is not in time.'* And while this holds good supremely and perfectly only of the Supreme Personality, it is true also of human personality; for 'if we were merely phenomena among phenomena, we could not have knowledge of a world of phenomena.'† 'The *Thing* is moved wholly from without; the *living* but not personal *object* determines its own reactions in some degree; the *Person* determines his reactions as much as anything else does. . . . The extent of the part played by a man's underived contribution to the scheme of things cannot be calculated in any given case. That there is such a contribution is certain, and that it is effective is certain. . . . Every individual has in him some underived element which assists in the determination of his conduct.'‡ As personality is essentially supratemporal, so it is essentially supraspatial. 'It appears that there is in the brain no one centre of consciousness to which all sensations are communicated; I who see am the same I who hear: yet there is no physiological basis of this "I" to whom all the sensations belong: the Ego or Self is therefore non-material.'§

* T. H. Green, *Prolegomena to Ethics.* † *Ibid.*
‡ W. Temple, *The Nature of Personality.*
§ Lotze, quoted by W. Temple, *The Nature of Personality.*

It will be objected that these considerations give a very negative idea of what personality really is. And this may be freely granted. Personality has not been, possibly cannot be, defined. But if an antithesis is made between a self-sufficing material world and a conscious personality —if it is maintained that the one or the other is an illusion—it is not personality which will suffer by the comparison. If modern thought is asked to choose between the Idealism of Berkeley and the Scepticism of Hume, it would side with the Bishop against the 'minute' philosopher. It is more arguable that spirit creates matter than that matter generates spirit. What is called 'the new theory of matter' has upset many calculations. Now that the 'atom' is conceived, not as a solid, but as the theatre of the activities of the electrons, which in their turn are nothing apart from their motion, we are not far from Berkeley's view of the sensible universe. If we could conceive motion to be suspended, there would not be the frightful cataclysm which the imagination would lead us to expect: the universe would simply *cease to exist:*

> The great globe itself,
> With all that it inhabit, would dissolve,
> And, like an unsubstantial pageant faded,
> Leave not a wrack behind.

If this should be a probable account of the matter, personality will not need to fear

the disintegrating effects of a discredited Materialism.

What bearing have these remarks upon our view of the conscience ?

1. As personality is spiritual—in the sense of being non-material—we shall not find that it is explained by physical appetites and impulses. Our apprehension of the moral order develops, but the moral order is something independent of our consciousness of it. Conscience is capable of apprehending what it could never have produced.

2. Personality is a unity, or rather a unit.* Desire, Intellect, Will, are not distinct ' faculties.' The whole person thinks, wills, desires. Conscience is not a separate faculty. It is not merely a superior principle moving among the thoughts, volitions, and desires, and demanding what it fails practically to enforce—viz., an unconditional submission. In abstract thinking Will is present; it is active in the effort which we call attention. Without it, thoughts wander. And Desire is implicit also in the process; there is the desire to make clear to oneself what was before obscure. Similarly, Will and Desire require some mentally presentable object to arouse them; they do not arise *in vacuo*. The

* See D'Arcy, *Short Study of Ethics ;* also Green, *Prolegomena,* § 117, quoted with approval by Sidgwick, *The Ethics of T. H. Green,* etc.

whole personality is in each and in all. We distinguish them for convenience, but the act is one because proceeding from one person. Conscience, therefore, is nothing less than the whole personality acting in a particular way—viz., in the way we call ethically or morally. Conscience is at work when we refuse to consider some mentally presentable idea—*e.g.*, an unnatural crime —and resolutely shut the door of the mind upon it. Conscience is present in Desire; for appetite in man is not merely instinctive. A moral choice is overt or latent. Whether in any given case I shall satisfy my hunger depends upon whether, *e.g.*, I am in a town in a state of siege, where women and children have the first claim; or whether, the circumstances being normal, I am a Churchman and my Church bids me fast. And conscience cannot be dissociated from will, which is purposive. I may see clearly—mentally—my advantage; and desire may prompt me to follow it. But before I can adopt it as my purpose, conscience has a word to say. Of course conscience may not have the last word. Action often takes place in defiance of conscience or in defiance of reason, or without any definite purpose—we 'toss up' for it, as we say. But it is the whole personality which acts, and conscience cannot be separated from personality. 'Every act of ours —the most criminal, the most mad—pre-

supposes a balance of thought, feeling, and will, like a correct attitude for an effective stroke in a game.'*

3. Personality does not act in a void. As an organism implies an environment which is its correlative, so spirit implies a spiritual environment. Idealism does not mean solipsism. Berkeley is accused of coming near it in his earlier works, but clears himself of it in his more mature philosophy.† 'Nature, while it must be accepted as a fact, is not a fact which can stand alone. With a part of Nature—the cosmos of experience—we are intimately acquainted, and our acquaintance with that part proves that natural things exist only as they are constituted by spirit. Natural things depend upon spirit for their very possibility. Nature as a whole, then, exists only on condition that there is Spirit to constitute it. In other words, if Nature is a fact, GOD is. Our belief in a vast natural universe integrating all possible experiences is found to imply belief in a Universal Spirit—that is, in GOD.'‡

Now, conscience is sensitive to this spiritual environment, as the barometer is sensitive to atmospheric pressure. The instinct of Prayer is so deep and widespread that it must stand for something in the scheme

* Joseph Conrad, *Chance*.
† See Berkeley's works, *Siris*.
‡ D'Arcy, *Short Study of Ethics*, p. 18.

of things. If it be attributed to 'magic,' this must be because there is magic in the universe. And a magical universe implies a Master Magician. 'The priest appeals to the fear of the supernatural.' Granted; but you have not accounted for this fear by denying that the supernatural exists. You have only proved, at most, that pure reason cannot explain the fear. You have only shown that the reasoning faculty is not the whole of personality: which is a truism. 'Man would seem to be possessed of an instinct which, under all its forms, would seem to have one general characteristic. Moved by it, man would appear to be always possessed by the desire to set up sanctions for his individual conduct, which would appear to be *super*-natural against those which were natural, sanctions which would appear to be *ultra*-rational against those which were simply rational.'* Personality is, in varying degrees, aware of the supernatural, or spiritual.† And conscience is the register of that awareness. Prayer is the outward sign of that awareness. Darwin says that 'when the suppliant kneels, and holds up his hands with the palms joined, he represents a captive who proves the completeness of his submission

* B. Kidd, *Social Evolution.*

† 'Spiritual' is the better word, but 'supernaturalism' may stand as a convenient antithesis to 'naturalism.'

by offering up his hands to be bound by the victor.* We need not dispute the explanation, though we need not limit the attitude to 'one of slavish subjection.' Prayer is the willing self-surrender of the human personality as it comes into contact with the Eternal Personality; it loses that it may find itself: 'FATHER, into Thy hands I commend my spirit.'

* Darwin, *Expression of the Emotions.*

CHAPTER V

SOME DEFINITIONS OF CONSCIENCE

It would appear from the foregoing considerations that the scope of Conscience is as wide as Personality, including Will, Desire, and Intelligence. Intellectual questions are fundamentally moral questions, for the love of truth is presupposed in the mind's work; this alone gives the needful stimulus to the student even of, *e.g.*, Mathematics, which would seem most independent of morals. Will and Desire are more obviously concerned with morals; it is this element which raises them into the *human* sphere, above mere animal appetite.

Indeed, it may be argued that all practical questions are moral questions. The carpenter, the mason, the blacksmith, deal with ethical principles which are expressed in the very terms of their work—the *right*, the *straight*, the *true*. The interest of their work—apart from its wages—lies just in the fact that it is brought to the test of reality: superficial work, scamped work, dishonest work, falls down or refuses to stand up. The *personality* of the worker and the *law* of the material in which he

works are both involved, and according to the rightness of their relation there results coherence or incoherence in the work.

Moral or ethical principles are equally implicit in every work of art;* it is by reference to the moral law that we distinguish (as Carlyle said) 'a work of art from a daub of artifice.'

If conscience is given the wide extension which it seems to claim, it would appear impossible adequately to define it. But it may be helpful to the student to have various views before him at a glance:

Bernard (1091-1153): 'Conscience is the book in which our daily sins are written.'

Whewell (1794-1866): 'As science means knowledge, conscience etymologically means self-knowledge. But the English word implies a moral standard of action in the mind, as well as a consciousness of our own actions. Conscience is the reason employed about questions of right and wrong, and accompanied with sentiments of approbation and disapprobation.'

South (1633-1716): 'Conscience, according to the very notation of it, imports a double or joint knowledge—to wit, one of a Divine law or rule, and the other of a man's own action: and so is properly the

* A good craftsman is one who works not only 'with a will,' but with conscience. It is sincerity which reveals the personality of the worker. See Mr. Kipling's story, *The Wrong Thing*.

application of a general law to a particular instance of practice. The law of GOD, for example, says, Thou shalt not steal; and the mind of man tells him that the taking of such a thing from a person lawfully possessed of it is stealing. Whereupon the conscience, joining the knowledge of both these together, pronounces in the name of GOD that such a particular action ought not to be done. And this is the true procedure of conscience—always supposing a law from GOD, before it pretends to lay any obligation upon man. . . . Mere opinion or persuasion may be every whit as strong, and have as forcible an influence upon a man's actions, as conscience itself. But if there is no law, no word or command of GOD to ground it upon, it is not conscience.'

Jeremy Taylor (1612-1667): 'In some cases conscience is like an eloquent and fair-spoken judge, who declaims not against the criminal, but condemns him justly. In others the judge is more angry, and affrights the prisoner more; but the event is the same. For in those sins where the conscience affrights, as in those where it affrights not, supposing the sins equal, but of different natures, there is no other difference, but the conscience is a clock which in one man strikes aloud and gives warning, and in another the hand points silently to the figure, but strikes not: but by this he may as surely *see* as the other *hears*.'

Charnock (1628-1670): 'Conscience is natural to man, and an active faculty.'

Saurin (1677-1730): 'This interior master, does he dictate nothing to you? This rack of the Almighty, does it never force you to confess what you would willingly deny?'

Swift (1667-1745): 'Religion is a cloak, and conscience a pair of breeches.'

Charles Bradlaugh (1833-1891): 'A spasm of the diaphragm.'

Butler (1692-1752): 'There is a superior principle of reflection or conscience in every man which distinguishes between the internal principles of his heart as well as his external actions; which passes judgment on himself and them; pronounces determinately some actions to be in themselves just, right, good: others to be in themselves evil, wrong, unjust; which without being consulted, without being advised with, magisterially exercises itself, and approves or condemns him, the doer of them, accordingly; and which, if not forcibly stopped, naturally and always, of course, goes on to anticipate a higher and more effectual sentence, which shall hereafter second and affirm its own.'

'Your obligation to obey this law is in its being the law of your nature. That your conscience approves of and attests to such a course of action is itself alone an obligation. Conscience does not only offer itself to show us the way we should walk in,

but it likewise carries its own authority with it, that it is our natural guide; the guide assigned us by the Author of our nature: it therefore belongs to our condition of being, it is our duty to walk in that path and follow this guide, without looking about to see whether we may not possibly forsake them with impunity.'

'You cannot form a notion of this faculty, conscience, without taking in judgment, direction, superintendency. This is a constituent part of the idea, that is, of the faculty itself; and to preside and govern, from the very economy and constitution of man, belongs to it. Had it strength, as it has right; had it power, as it has manifest authority, it would absolutely govern the world.'

'This faculty was placed within us to be our proper governour; to direct and regulate all under principles, passions, and motives of action. This is its right and office; thus sacred is its authority.'

'[Conscience is] the principle in man by which he approves or disapproves his heart temper and actions.'

'A moral faculty: whether called conscience, moral reason, moral sense, or Divine reason: whether considered as a sentiment of the understanding or as a perception of the heart: or, which seems the truth, as including both.'

Adam Smith (1723-1790): 'We approve

or disapprove the conduct of others: we see ourselves as others see us, judging ourselves from their standpoint: form a true social standard, that of "the impartial spectator." This inner standard is conscience.'

Martensen (1808-1884): 'Conscience is not mere impulse, the impulse of obedience and subordination, the aim of which is GOD and GOD'S kingdom: it is not mere instinct which makes known to man what in an ethical respect is serviceable to him, and what he must avoid for the preservation of his soul; just as the instinct of animals makes known to them what is serviceable to their self-preservation and incites them to avoid the opposite. It is also consciousness, knowledge, information, man's joint acquaintance with himself and with GOD, the consciousness direct, essential, differing from all consciousness of reflection and idea of our dependence not merely on the law, but on the binding and determining *authority* which speaks to us through the law. . . . It is man's ideal, or the ideal man in us, which here expresses itself, commanding or censuring in relation to the empirical man. . . . Conscience is therefore the warden of the marches for the will, the maintainer of unity in the life of the individual: which unity is only possible when the individual, at every point of his life of free-will, subjects himself to the demands of his ideal, or of his eternal being.'

'Among all races of men who are not sunk into a condition of brutality, conscience, however imperfect their idea of GOD may be, is considered not as the voice of man alone, but as the voice of GOD; and only thus can the majesty of conscience be adequately expressed.'

'Conscience is a fundamental form of man's personal consciousness of eternity, that uneffaceable certainty—the certainty that the relation of *duty* is not a relation which stands and falls with our relations to the world and to men, but in its essence is a relation to the holy and almighty GOD.'

T. H. Green (1836-1882): 'The individual's conscience is reason in him as informed by the work of reason without him in the structure and controlling sentiments of society. The basis of that structure, the source of those sentiments, can only be a self-objectifying spirit; a spirit through the action of which beings such as we are, endowed with certain animal susceptibilities and affected by certain natural sympathies, become capable of striving after some bettering or fulfilment of themselves which they conceive as an absolute good.'

'The function of conscience is not to estimate the precise value of an act (which is, strictly speaking, impossible to us), but to maintain moral aspiration.'*

Martineau (1805-1900): 'If it be true

* A. C. Bradley's gloss on Green.

that over a free and living person nothing short of a free and living person can have higher authority, then it is certain that a "subjective" conscience is impossible. The faculty is more than part and parcel of myself; it is the communion of GOD'S life and guiding love entering and abiding with an apprehensive capacity in myself.'

'Every case in which the springs of action solicit us in pairs introduces a fresh consciousness of relative right; and as the instances accumulate the feeling is deepened (if they are repetitions) and widened (if they are new): with the effect of condensing at last the whole of these experiences, gathered by the sense of relative right, into one large affection of special type, whose love and aversion work only within this relation. We call it Conscience. . . . *Any* knowledge with ourselves, large or small, which we may have of the superior right of one spring of action over another, comes under the category of conscience.'

'Conscience is the critical perception we have of the relative authority of our several principles of action. The sense of that authority is *implicitly* contained in the mere natural strife of these principles within us. When *explicitly* brought into view by reflective self-knowledge, it assumes a systematic character, and asserts its prerogative as the

judicial regulator of life. Its proper business is to watch the forces of our nature and keep everything in its place.'

Sidgwick (1838-1900): 'In my view, the authority of Conscience is the authority of Reason in its application to practice: "authority" or "obligation," in my view, expresses the relation that we recognise on reflection between a judgment as to what ought to be willed by us and a non-rational impulse prompting in a direction opposed to this judgment. I can imagine no other kind of ultimate authority than this. If rules are binding as Divine, it is, in my view, because Reason is an essential attribute of Divinity. . . . To know ethical truth, and not to desire and will to act in accordance with it, implies defect in the mind that thus knows; but this is quite consistent with the view that Conscience is essentially Intellect or Reason applied to Practice.'

'So long as the principle in man that governs or ought to govern is regarded merely as the faculty of knowing our true good, together with its main causes and conditions, it hardly seems important to inquire how this faculty originated. But when the moral faculty had come to be conceived as conscience—*i.e.*, as a faculty cognisant of rules absolutely binding, to be obeyed without reference to the agent's apparent interest, a kind of legislator within the man that claims unquestioned

and unconditional supremacy over all other springs of action—it was to be expected that the legitimacy of its claim would be challenged and seriously investigated.'

Dewey: 'Conscience is a standing habit of mind which reflects on one's own behaviour in relation to the existing order.'

'The conscientious person is one who has made the law of GOD or man an inward law of life—a moral law.'

D'Arcy: 'Conscience is not, as some believe, a special faculty which is the source of obligation, and which (as its own distinct province) sits in judgment upon conduct, and pronounces the decisive "ought" of approval, or "ought not" of disapproval. Conscience is simply the consciousness of obligation. . . . Conscience in its actual exercise contains the conviction that there is such a thing as obligation, decides that this act, or this class of acts, is obligatory, and at the same time involves an element of feeling which may be more or less intense. . . . When a man finds himself driven into a corner by the adverse opinion of the community, he traces conscience up to its ultimate source in his own personality, finds there an ultimate authority, and (if he be strong) holds to what he conceives to be right, even though he have to "suffer for conscience' sake."'

'There can be no doubt that very often there is, in addition to regard for the dicta-

tion of conscience, a belief in the approval of GOD. And in such cases it is the conviction that in some way or other the voice of conscience is the voice of GOD which gives to the martyr for principle the sublime confidence which carries him through. . . . This conviction is the only possible justification of the assumption which conscience must make if it is to be truly authoritative —viz., that the moral judgment has universal validity.'

Rashdall: 'In ordinary language, Conscience is usually used to indicate, not merely the faculty of knowing what we ought to do, but also the whole complex of emotions and impulses which impel us to the doing of what we know to be right, or deter us from the doing of what we know to be wrong. When we talk about conscience "remonstrating," or "rebuking," or "enjoining," or "impelling," we clearly mean to imply some kind of emotional impulse or desire as well as mere knowledge.'

Gore: 'A faculty for knowing GOD and His will.'

Newman: 'Conscience is something more than a moral sense; it always implies the recognition of a living object towards which it is directed. If we are ashamed at transgressing the voice of conscience, this implies that there is One to whom we are responsible.'

Darwin (1809-1882): 'Of all the differences between man and the lower animals, the moral sense or conscience is by far the most important; but the distinction is one of degree, not of kind.'

Bain (1818-1903): 'Conscience is a product of the opinion of the community.'

Fowler: 'Conscience stands simply for the aggregate of our moral opinions reinforced by the moral sanction of self-approbation or self-disapprobation which in most cases has become habitually attached to them.'

CHAPTER VI

DEFINITIONS OF CONSCIENCE COMPARED

The divergence of views which was brought out in the last chapter indicates that a final and satisfactory definition of conscience has not been attained. And this is not surprising. The big and important things in life are too big to get into a definition. Definitions are the attempts of the practical intellect (so we have been recently taught) to take 'snap-shots' of the moving Cinematograph of Reality. Yet the snap-shots have a relative validity, and a series of them may bring us nearer to an apprehension of truth.

Swift's epigram* is frankly the view of the eighteenth-century cynics satirised by Berkeley in, *e.g.*, *Hylas and Philonous*. Religion is priestcraft; it is a mere cloak to hide a selfish ambition; and conscience is a garb assumed to give an appearance of decency to conduct which would be too shocking if exposed in its native nakedness. According to this view, conscience would rank among those protective instincts possessed, *e.g.*, by the stick-cater-

* See p. 49.

pillar, which deceives its enemy by imitation; or a harmless insect which assumes the colours of a poisonous species in the interest of self-preservation. But conscience—from the cynical point of view—is more likely to be a drawback than an advantage to its possessor, and in any case has no moral significance.

Bradlaugh's 'spasm of the diaphragm' puts the 'naturalistic' hypothesis into a sentence. Conscience does not 'assume a virtue while it has it not'; it is not hypocrisy, but a regrettable reflex action which we would suppress if we could. It ranks with a sneeze or a hiccough; it betrays a (probably unwelcome) sensitiveness to a moral draught, or to a pepperiness in our mental diet. We should be ashamed of a weakness, which we shall strive to overcome, or at least to ignore, comforting ourselves with the reflection that the pharynx and larynx of the super-man will be *sans peur et sans reproche*.

Butler's sermons on Human Nature still stand as the weightiest contribution to the doctrine of conscience; they are the classical exposition of the place of conscience in human nature. To quote J. H. Bernard: 'Butler held fast by a belief in an objective and eternal rule of right, prior not only to all considerations of utility and to all arbitrary conventions of men, but prior to the will of GOD Himself. And conscience, which

is the voice of God in man (Sermon iii. 5), reveals to him what the right course is under all circumstances, allowance being duly made for rare exceptional cases where it may be at fault. It is not a mere sentiment, but partakes of the rational element in man. Thus its moral imperative derives its authority from the fact that conscience is the supreme factor in our complex nature; to distrust or disobey it were to make light of the dictates of the nearest and highest authority which we can know—viz., our true self, which is the reflection of the Divine Image.'

Butler's doctrine has been severely criticised by Sir Leslie Stephen:* 'Conscience, says Butler, brings with it its own credentials: the supremacy "is a constituent part of the idea, that is of the faculty itself": it is implied in the very meaning of the word "duty." The conception of a self-evidencing power seems to involve a vicious circle. Exclude the idea of right from the supremacy, and the statement becomes inaccurate; admit it, and the definition includes the very thing to be defined. Conscience must in some way derive its credentials from some other authority than itself. . . . Butler's escape from the vicious circle really consists in his assumption that the conscience represents the will of God. . . . When behind nature we are conscious

* *English Thought in the Eighteenth Century.*

of nature's GOD, we reverence our instincts as implanted by a Divine hand, and inquire no farther into their origin and purpose. No suspicion occurred to him that the marks of a Divine origin which he supposed himself to be discovering by impartial examination might be merely the result of his having stated the problem in terms of theology.'

The 'vicious circle' argument is a favourite gambit of the logician. The pawn (conscience) would be unprotected if it were not guarded by the King (GOD). Stephen argues on the hypothesis that the King is not on the board; while to Butler the King is the fact which gives its meaning to the whole game. Remove the King, and it is not a question of a wrong move; there is no longer a problem to solve. The very notion that conscience is 'the voice of GOD' implies that, though it is 'supreme' among human faculties, the 'credentials which it brings with it' are countersigned by its Sovereign. That Butler 'stated the problem in terms of theology' is not his weakness, but his strength. He has perceived what has become clearer since his day, that the terms 'conscience' and GOD are complementary. Theism is essential to any doctrine of conscience. Naturalism if worked out to its logical conclusion—as was shown in Chapter III.—is destructive of the authority of conscience

in any form. And Agnosticism is only a halfway house between Naturalism and Theism. Instinctively it shrinks from the former; intellectually it repudiates the latter. It halts between two opinions.*

We shall see in a later chapter† that the postulate of conscience is faith in a moral order. But greatly as we are indebted to Butler, we are conscious that in the Sermons the authority of conscience is saved by ignoring or dismissing the study of its origin, and therefore we have moved away from his standpoint. He assumes conscience to appear—like Athene from the head of Zeus—fully grown and fully armed: from which it would appear to follow that its voice would speak alike and to the same effect at all times and in all men when not deliberately perverted, and that it should claim infallibility. In this respect Butler's theory seems to be disproved by experience.

Green's ethical doctrine of conscience depends upon his metaphysics—a scheme of thought which does not seem to gain increasing acceptance. His whole argument, as Sidgwick says, 'depends on the antithesis between the natural‡ and the moral.' This antithesis we have worked out in a former chapter.§ But in elabor-

* See note on p. 32. † See Chapter VIII.

‡ 'Naturalistic' is preferable, as less liable to misconception. § See p. 34.

ating this antithesis, Green does less than justice to human personality. He shows a tendency—like his prototype Berkeley—to dissolve it into GOD. 'GOD,' he says, 'is a Being with Whom the human spirit is identical, in the sense that He *is* all which the human spirit is capable of becoming . . . the Eternal Consciousness, the Spirit for which the relations of the universe exist, reproduces itself in us.' This view, or something like it, is no doubt, as Sidgwick says, 'in harmony with the prevalent religious sentiment of the present age,' which thinks of GOD rather as immanent in creation than transcendent. But it is apt to slide into Pantheism, and regard the human personality as a mode of the ETERNAL SPIRIT manifesting itself in time: whereas personality is something in its own right. Green's theory reminds one of the early heresy which, in the endeavour to guard Our LORD'S Godhead, emptied His Manhood of all reality. Green leaves us with only a *simulacrum* of personality, and therefore his treatment of the conscience is unsatisfying.

Martineau agrees with Green and Butler, that the dictates of conscience are unmeaning unless we give them a Theistic interpretation. Professor Sidgwick says 'it is not denied that there are many minds for whom this implication is necessary'—the implication, that is to say, 'that a true philosoph-

ical conception of the rule of right would recognise that the cognition of such a rule as a thought valid for all minds involves the recognition of a thinker, an eternal and universal subject of this and of all other thought.' Sidgwick, indeed, thinks it 'rash and unwarrantable to affirm that the dictates of conscience cannot be regarded as authoritative unless they are conceived as Divine commands.' But it is obvious that an authority which rests simply on an *ipse dixit*,

> Sic volo, sic iubeo: stet pro ratione voluntas,

cannot now, as Browning says in 'Bishop Blougram,' 'coerce us much.' We cannot exclude the idea of coerciveness from the idea of authority; moral authority depends on what may be called a sense of moral coercion—that is, the feeling of *obligation*. Martineau therefore seems to have good grounds for his contention that conscience draws its power from a higher authority: its decisions are felt to come to us from a loftier tribunal. I may feel that conscience has authority, even though I do not refer it to its source in GOD; but in this case I am more likely to criticise the authority than to obey it, when it gives a verdict contrary to my wishes.*

Martineau is less convincing when he describes conscience as 'the critical perception of the relative authority of our several

* See *Types of Ethical Theory*, vol. ii., p. 402 *foll.*

principles of action; the sensibility of the mind to the gradations of this scale.' The scale of ethical values—or, as he calls it, the table of the springs of action—gives us a kind of moral barometer, ranging from 'stormy' (Censoriousness, Suspiciousness), through the secondary affections (Sympathetic Feelings) to the 'set fair' of Compassion and Reverence. But conscience is more than a hand upon the dial pointing to what ought to be, without having the slightest influence upon the weather: conscience is more like the barometric pressure itself—or like the mercury which responds to the state of the moral atmosphere.

Sidgwick's account of conscience appears defective in identifying it entirely with the Rational faculty. He says: 'Conscience is essentially Intellect or Reason applied to Practice.' Its 'authority is the authority of Reason in its application to Practice.' If Reason be taken for the Divine Reason, or Λόγος—the ultimate moral principle of the cosmos—the definition may stand. But human reason or intellect is, *taken by itself*, essentially self-seeking and individualistic; whereas it is of the very essence of conscience to lead us to 'look not only on our own things, but also on the things of others.' Conscience is sensitive to motives of which the pure reason would take no account. It is more akin to Instinct than Intelligence. Bishop

D'Arcy's definition has the merit of simplicity. Conscience, he says, is 'simply the consciousness of obligation.' But this seems to resolve conscience into a mood or feeling; it makes too little of Reason, as Sidgwick makes too much. A man like Sir Edward Carson, for example, feels a passionate abhorrence of Home Rule; he would resist it to the death. The correlative of that abhorrence is loyalty to the cause of 'the Covenant.' But this 'consciousness of obligation' is not in itself conscience. The motive which inspires action is both rational and instinctive. Without Reason conscience would be blind impulse, though it might feel the 'consciousness of obligation'; without the instinct, 'the native hue of Resolution' would be 'sicklied o'er by the pale cast of Thought.' Conscience is more than Reflection or Feeling; it is the Personality thrusting itself up in an act of will.

For the same reason Professor Dewey's account of conscience—viz., that it is 'a standing habit of mind which reflects on one's own behaviour in relation to the existing order,' while it contains the valuable truth that it is a settled habit of mind rather than a feeling—does less than justice to the living force which is essential to the idea. Conscience does more than reflect: it judges and impels.

The profound humility of Darwin—no less

profound than his conscientiousness — led him, perhaps, to underrate the distinction between ourselves and our poor relations in the animal world. Certainly M. Bergson would traverse the statement that the distinction between us and them in regard to the conscience ' is one of degree, not of kind.' He comes to the conclusion that ' not only does consciousness appear as the motive principle of evolution, but also, among conscious beings themselves, man comes to occupy a privileged place. Between him and the animals the difference is no longer one of degree, but of kind.'*

From the consideration of these varying views of conscience a provisional definition might perhaps be framed thus: Conscience is the whole personality acting ethically; or, more precisely, *Conscience is the reaction, pleasurable or painful, of the whole personality in response to a human or Divine standard.*

This account of it will perhaps give us reason to believe that conscience is authoritative, yet not infallible, and that it develops *pari passu* with personality: as will more fully appear in the sequel.

* H. Bergson, *Creative Evolution.*

CHAPTER VII

CONSCIENCE NOT INFALLIBLE

If we regard conscience not as a phosphorescent gleam playing upon the surface of consciousness, but as a vital impulse, partly rational, partly instinctive, welling up from the depths of Personality, we shall not run the risk of denying its authority; while we shall see why it does not, and cannot, claim infallibility.

Professor Illingworth has said that the advent of Christianity created a new epoch in the development of personality.* No doubt the Incarnation gave an immense impetus to the *consciousness* of Personality by bringing the fact and its implications into clearer light. The new revelation of the Triune Personality of God illumined man's knowledge of himself. But 'we live first and think afterwards.' The fact preceded the theory. Now, no one claims that our human personality is infallible, and therefore no claim to infallibility can be set up on behalf of conscience, as defined in the last chapter.

No doubt the objection will be urged:

* Illingworth, *Personality, Human and Divine.*

'If conscience be not infallible, where is its authority?' This will be considered later. At present we note what is an undoubted fact, and suggest some reasons for the fact.

Take two or three examples, almost at random.

We read in Genesis that Abraham was conscious of a Voice which came to him with the urgency of a Divine command: 'Take thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah, and offer him there for a burnt-offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of.' To Abraham the problem was a simple one; his natural love conflicted with his sense of duty. His conscience did not tell him that human sacrifice was wrong. If the voice of conscience and the Voice recognised as that of GOD had been in conflict, there would have been (as F. W. Robertson says*) no issue but insanity. Doubtless the story as a whole taught the Jews that human sacrifice was abhorrent to Jehovism: for we have the history of the Jews to show us that, unlike the Canaanitish tribes, they were almost entirely free from human sacrifices. But the point is that Abraham's conscience did not forbid it; while at a later date the very idea would have been intolerable. Micah says: 'Shall I give my first-born for my

* F. W. Robertson, *Notes on Genesis.*

transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good: and what doth the LORD require of thee but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy GOD?' What conscience enjoined and what it forbade in Abraham and Micah are diametrically opposite. Conscience not only differs in its sanctions in different ages and among different races, but even in the same individual at different times. St. Paul tells us that he thought he 'ought to do many things contrary to the name of JESUS of Nazareth.' Afterwards he felt that he was 'not meet to be called an Apostle,' because he 'persecuted the Church of GOD.' But he 'found mercy, because he did it ignorantly.' What conscience had enjoined, under a higher illumination it now forbade. The same inconsistency meets us at every turn. The conscience of the Jew forbids him to eat pork; the conscience of the Indian forbids beef; the conscience of the vegetarian forbids flesh-meat. The conscience of the Christian forbids polygamy; to the African it may present itself in the light of a duty. In China the drowning of superfluous infants of the female sex may be sanctioned by social custom, and excite no 'storm of disapproving feeling' such as cruelty to children would arouse among ourselves. As Hastings Rashdall* says,

* H. Rashdall, *Ethics*.

'If the Intuitionist really does maintain that, as a matter of fact, all human beings have always judged the same things to be right or wrong, if he even maintains with the cautious Bishop Butler that "almost any fair man in almost any circumstances" will know what is the right thing to do, then the existence of these diverse and inconsistent moral ideals is sufficient to refute his contention. We need not look beyond the Old Testament and Homer to see that moral ideals have not always been the same; and even among the most enlightened and morally developed individuals at the present day—in the same nation, in the same class, on the same educational level—there are unquestionably very considerable differences, not merely as to the right course of action in some particular collocation of circumstances, but even about most general questions of ethical principle.'

But these facts need not drive us to a purely Utilitarian, much less an entirely Hedonistic, theory of conscience, unless we adopt a Naturalistic view of Personality, which we have seen to be untenable. It is not denied that conscience has a history, and that its history may be traced like any other matter of observation. It develops in time and manifests its presence in different ways, because conscience is a growing and developing organ, or, rather, is

Personality considered as *moving*, not fixed. An infallible thing is a fixed thing, and in the movement which is Life we desire to rest on something fixed and infallible. But GOD wills that we should rest in Him, not in any temple made with hands. As Augustine says, 'Thou hast made us, O LORD, for Thyself, and our hearts are restless until they find rest in Thee.'

Some men seek for an infallible Church; a necessity of the mind seems to impel them. This is one aspect of the present 'crisis' in the Anglican communion. A Missionary Bishop passionately longs to be backed up by the united Episcopate as representing the voice of the Church. This is right and natural and inevitable. Without this authority he feels deserted, if not betrayed. But perhaps the problem *from God's side* is just this: whether a human soul will endure when cut off from the base of an authority which it would fain accept as ultimate—*i.e.*, infallible. The ultramontane theory of the Papacy is just this human longing formalised, stereotyped, and reduced to a logical system. As J. N. Figgis says:* 'Whether the doctrine of omnipotence be proclaimed in Church or State, whether it take the form of monarchy by Divine right or the sovereignty of the people, always and everywhere this doctrine is false; for

* J. N. Figgis, *Churches in the Modern State.*

whether or no men can frame a logical theory to express the fact, the great fact at the root of all human society is that man is a person, a spiritual being; and that no power—not even a religious society—is absolute, but in the last resource his allegiance to his own conscience is final.' Here we have an echo of Bishop Creighton's true and wise teaching:* 'The central mechanism of the [medieval] Church always tended to become abstract, to grow out of genuine contact with life. . . . The medieval Church fell, because it had ceased to influence human life through its excessive endeavours to accommodate itself to its needs; because it expanded its system to meet the requirements of feeble consciences, which grew feebler the more they were tended; because it undertook to do so much for men's souls that men felt that they were losing all consciousness that their souls were, after all, their own.'

Turning from the theory of an infallible Church, men sought a fixed point in the theory of an infallible Bible. Upon this theory Protestant Christianity still stands *de iure*, though not *de facto*. The theory arose historically as the only counter-theory available to fight the claims of an infallible Papacy. But the new theory was no better than the old; and the alarmingly rapid disintegration of belief among the

* M. Creighton, *Church and Nation*.

sects—dissolving, as Hugh Benson said, into 'a little sentiment'—shows convincingly that the theory of an infallible Book cannot be a court of final appeal.

Driven from these positions, men of an ethical turn try to find an infallible authority in conscience. The desire is legitimate, the effort is necessary. But the inquiry we have made above shows that the result is not achieved.

To what conclusion, then, are we led? Surely to this, that conscience—like the Bible and the Church—is not a fixed and infallible thing. It is not like a foot-rule which can be applied ready-made to measure conduct. Were it this, it would indeed be simple, but, like the foot-rule, it would be mechanical and dead. Spirit cannot be measured in terms of matter. It is not thus that GOD trains and educates man. We want to have a fixed standard by which to judge and test action, and to rest in this. But, in human things, what is essential is not immobility, but movement. What is essential in conscience is not the standard, but the sensitiveness which is the movement itself. The effort to achieve a standard, not the standard considered as fixed, is what is valuable in the sight of GOD.

CHAPTER VIII

THE POSTULATE OF CONSCIENCE

We have provisionally defined conscience as the reaction, pleasurable or painful, of the whole Personality in response to a human or Divine standard.

This definition gives room for the undoubted fact, brought out in the last chapter, that conscience, as we observe it at work, sanctions conflicting codes of conduct. The human standard varies; and therefore the response our personality makes to the standard must be—and in fact is—a variable response. A Judge who interprets the law must give his ruling on the basis of precedents—*i.e.*, on the *corpus* of civil or criminal decisions which make up the current standard—and conscience gives its verdict according to the current standard which is recognised by society as a moral law. With the advance or retrogression of moral jurisprudence 'there will be of necessity a change also in the law' of conscience.

Professor Sidgwick* brings out this point

* H. Sidgwick, *Practical Ethics*, p. 7.

clearly. 'I sometimes wonder,' said he, 'whether the great Bishop Butler, who lays so much emphasis on the clearness and certainty of the dictates of a plain man's conscience—I wonder whether this generally cautious thinker would use quite the same language if he lived now. It certainly seems to me that the practical perplexities of the plain man have materially increased in the century and a half that have elapsed since the famous sermons to which I refer were preached. Take, *e.g.*, the case of compassion. The plain man of Butler's time knew that when he heard the cry of distress he ought to put his hand in his pocket and relieve it; but now he has learnt from newspapers and magazines that indiscriminate almsgiving aggravates in the long-run the evils that it attempts to cure; and therefore now, when he hears the cry of woe, it is apt to stir in his mind a disagreeable doubt and conflict, instead of the old simple impulse.'

The Bishop 'used his wealth liberally, as one to whom earthly possessions were of little importance,'* and gave 'to him who asked.' The Professor gave, presumably, to the Charity Organisation Society. In either case conscience supplied the motive, but its manifestation differed.

If the human standard varies, is this

* Sir L. Stephen, *English Thought in the Eighteenth Century*.

equivalent to admitting that there is no Moral Law which abides unalterably the same? Are we forced to the conclusion that conscience is merely relative to human opinion and to the changing social standard? Is there a postulate of conscience which is in any sense universal? Such questions surely suggest the answer that *the postulate of conscience is faith in a moral order.*

This proposition would probably pass with many for a truism. We are so constituted as to believe in a moral order, and from this order conscience derives its meaning and sanction. But the statement demands further scrutiny if its implications are to be accepted. For the existence of a moral order in the universe points directly to Theism, and would seem to make any genuine morality dependent on the religious sanctions. This conclusion, however, is stoutly denied both by Christian and Agnostic writers on Ethics. The question, therefore, to be considered in this chapter is whether or no there is a recognisable moral order independent of Theism: in other words, whether conscience does or does not imply GOD.

It has been, perhaps, sufficiently indicated that thoroughgoing Naturalism, worked out into Determinism, ignores, and therefore logically denies, a 'moral order.' If the phrase is still used, it only stands for

a set of subjective feelings to which nothing in the nature of things corresponds.*

Is there any resting-ground between thoroughgoing Naturalism on the one hand, and thoroughgoing Theism on the other?

Those writers who treat Ethics as a science assume that it is a self-sufficing system of thought which is able to stand alone. I take three typical examples:

1. Professor Fowler defines the relation of Religion to Morality thus: 'Religion is more than Morality: it is the consecration and idealisation of it in a Perfect Being Whom we are constrained to revere, adore, and love.' But in his treatise on *Progressive Morality*† he proposes to discuss Morality 'as an independent science—that is to say, on grounds distinct from religious and theological considerations.' He says that 'an *independent* morality—that is to say, a system of moral principles and rules based exclusively on rational considerations, as distinct from the usages of society or the dictates of law and religion'—is 'a necessity.' This 'necessity of constituting a science of morality independently of religious considerations' he maintains thus: (*a*) 'No religion, not even the Christian, enjoins precepts covering the whole range of moral conduct.'

Granting this somewhat disputable as-

* See Chapter III., 'Conscience and Naturalism.'

† T. Fowler, *Progressive Morality*, p. 21 *foll.*

sumption, it is obvious that the function of Religion is to inspire motives and sanctions of conduct rather than to lay down a stereotyped code of precepts. It does not consist 'in carnal ordinances, but in the power of an endless life.' (*b*) Morality, or Ethics, must decide among the claims of Religions competing for our allegiance. 'Morality is in one sense the test and guardian of religion. It is a condition of its truth and the guardian of its purity.' But in what sense? This would imply that morality was anterior to religion, whereas it is tolerably plain that 'in early group life morals was not separate from politics and religion.'* But however this may be, the conclusion does not hold. The 'Ethical man' choosing his religion on moral grounds is as much an abstraction as the 'Economic man' dear to the Manchester school of political economy, or the 'Undenominational man' invented to solve our Educational difficulties. (*c*) 'Missionary effort necessarily implies the possibility of appealing to common principles of morality, recognised or at least recognisable by both sides;' and (*d*) 'Our LORD and His Apostles constantly appeal to the moral consciousness' of their hearers. But these facts tell strongly against the theory of an independent morality. The Missionary, following the example of the Apostles and their com-

* Dewey and Tufts, *Ethics*.

mon Master, appeals not to the moral sense of his hearers, which may be so debased and degraded as to be practically non-existent. He claims to come with a Divine revelation, a message from a living GOD; and the ground of the appeal is primarily not ethical, but theological: 'GOD has not left Himself without witness: He is not far from any one of us: He hath made of one [blood] all men to dwell on the face of all the earth: we are His offspring.' It is on the ground of these theological postulates that the moral sense is awakened. The fact that there is a kinship between GOD and man cannot be deduced from Ethics. (*e*) 'If we regarded religion as the sole source of morality, we should not be justified in punishing persons of an alien religion except for crimes forbidden by their own creed.' He who believes that all 'religions'—alien or otherwise—have equal value, would not be justified in punishing worshippers at other altars whose morality comes into conflict with his own. But the Christian believes the Christian Revelation to be that of the living GOD, and the 'alien religions' to be less than a full communion with GOD. If we say that morality comes from religion, we are not bound to say that equally good morality comes from every form of religion. When the moralities conflict, we are justified in believing

that CHRIST's code is the best—even though the non-Christian morality has its source in a form of religion.

(*f*) 'To make morality depend on the arbitrary will of GOD is virtually to strip GOD of all moral attributes.' But this is to introduce into the argument a quite inadmissible assumption—viz., that the will of GOD is 'arbitrary.' It was obvious from early times that we cannot revere 'the naked attributes of omniscience and omnipotence.' The sympathy which was felt by the spectator of Greek tragedy, and to which the dramatist appealed—*e.g.*, in *Prometheus Bound*—sprang from the instinctive revolt against omnipotence which was the deification of naked force. It is not unchristian to approve warmly of the sentiment of J. S. Mill when he said: 'If an omnipotent Being can condemn me to hell for refusing to believe what I see no reason for believing, then to hell I will go.' But the Christian is committed to the fundamental dogma that GOD is Love, which conditions all his thoughts of Deity. The Divine Fatherhood—which CHRIST *revealed*—is so generally admitted that it is hardly felt to be a religious dogma. If GOD is Personal—and He cannot be less, though He no doubt is more—the essence of His Personality must be conceived as Love, not as 'arbitrary will,' which is a Unitarian

or pagan, but not a Christian, conception. Bishop Butler insisted on this when he spoke of 'a thing of the utmost importance which I do believe'—viz., 'the moral fitness and unfitness of actions, prior to all will whatever': which is as much as to say, not that morality is prior to Religion, or Moral Law to a Divine Lawgiver, but that the basis of the Divine Nature is *goodness*, or, more strictly speaking, love. The Nominalists argued that the ultimate standard of morality was the arbitrary will of GOD. But Aquinas, who represents the prevailing view of the Church, held that, while GOD always wills what is just, nothing is just solely because He wills it: the ideas of right and wrong are eternally and immutably resident in the Divine Intellect.* 'The moral attributes of GOD consist,' as Butler says, 'in the conformity of the Divine Will to the Law of Truth; in the "righteousness, which is an everlasting righteousness"; and in that goodness of the Sovereign Mind which gave birth to the universe.'†

The Theist therefore, and especially the Christian Theist, seems to have no reason to deprive Morality of its—to him—natural support in the religious sanctions expressed in terms of Theology.

* See Bernard's note on chapter vi., Part I., of Butler's *Analogy*.

† See Butler's Sermon XIV., on the Love of God.

2. But with the Agnostic the case stands otherwise. To him it is essential to show that Ethics is independent of what he would call supernatural sanctions. I take as one example Professor Sidgwick, who represents the best type of English Utilitarianism, or Universalistic — as distinguished from egoistic — hedonism. The foundation and justification of Morality is sought in happiness, conceived not as merely or chiefly individual, but social, and enlarged to the widest possible degree—*i.e.*, so as to take in all humanity, and as far as conceivable all sentient creatures. Happiness, thus interpreted, is undoubtedly more attractive to our minds than the doctrine of the older Utilitarians, as it brings into play the developing altruistic sentiments. But in the quest of happiness shall we achieve virtue as a kind of by-product, or *πάρεργον*? Without a Theistic postulate shall we be able to maintain that now or at any future time happiness and virtue will coincide? This is the critical question for Utilitarian Ethics, which does not appear to admit of any satisfactory answer. 'Be virtuous,' says the Moralist. 'Why?' says the natural man. 'Because virtue leads to happiness.' 'But not *my* happiness,' is the reply. 'Perhaps not, but to that of the social organism of which you are a part. And the happiness of these others—into which you may enter by

sympathetic imagination—*ought* to be as important and attractive to you as your own.' The retort is inevitable: 'To *whom* do I owe this duty? What do you mean by I *ought?* I am sure that in seeking my own happiness I am pursuing my own good; but by sacrificing it to the notion of Duty or Virtue can I be equally sure that I am increasing the sum of happiness of all sentient creatures? I am certainly diminishing it in the case of one sentient creature —viz., myself.'

Professor Sidgwick combats the implication. He says:* 'In Dr. Martineau's view the idea of Duty necessarily implies the recognition of "another Person" who has authority over us. . . . The dictates of conscience, Martineau holds, are unmeaning unless we give them a Theistic interpretation. Now, I quite admit that a Christian Theist must necessarily conceive of the dictates of conscience as Divine commands; but I think it rash and unwarrantable in him to affirm that they cannot be regarded as authoritative unless they are so conceived. To me, indeed, it is inconceivable that the authoritativeness or bindingness of moral rules should depend essentially on the fact that they emanate from "another Person." . . . If Martineau does not deny that the "authority of Reason" respecting

* H. Sidgwick, *The Ethics of Green, Spencer and Martineau*, p. 323.

relations of quantity may exist for the atheistic mathematician, I think he is bound in consistency to admit that the "authority of conscience respecting the right" may similarly exist for the atheistic moralist.'

Without discussing the question whether the formal data of mathematics can be usefully compared with the vital data of Ethics—a question which I should answer in the negative*—a case may be put, unlike Martineau's 'lone man in an atheistic world,'† which seems insoluble on Utilitarian premises. The Good and the Right possess their authority to the Utilitarian because they tend to the greatest possible happiness of the greatest number of sentient beings. Now suppose a case which I do not think actually happened, but which may easily be conceived as happening. Suppose that Cecil Rhodes deliberately caused the South African War, as many people believed at the time. This would be characterised (and was, in fact, characterised) as an immoral act of unscrupulous aggression. But he might defend his action thus: 'Granted that so many thousands of soldiers and citizens will be slain, and the land cleared of its inhabitants. In a few years the land so cleared will produce increased harvests of gold and grain. More food will mean an increase of human pro-

* See H. Bergson, *Creative Evolution.*
† Martineau, *Types of Ethical Theory.*

ductiveness and an increase of population; thriving townships and farmsteads will support a people more numerous and richer in the comforts which make life desirable than could have existed without my action. Therefore on the Utilitarian hypothesis my action was right and good, and deserved, not reprobation, but approval.' Granting the premises, how can the moralist avoid the conclusion? Yet every ethical writer would condemn the defence as intolerable. On the Theistic hypothesis that the statesman is responsible to 'another Person, greater and higher and of deeper insight,' the supposed action is at once seen to be wrong.

3. Herbert Spencer holds that the 'method of universalistic hedonism, or utilitarianism, is far more unsatisfactory [even] than egoistic hedonism.'* But is the 'rational utilitarianism,' which he would substitute for it, more satisfactory? It might seem so if we could share Spencer's optimistic faith in the beneficence of the evolutionary process. His argument in the *Data of Ethics* might, perhaps, be fairly summarised in some such way as this: We are practically agreed that the answer to the question, 'Is life worth living?' must be at least a qualified affirmative: 'the balance is in favour of a qualified optimism.'† Otherwise 'evolution has been a

* H. Spencer, *Data of Ethics*, p. 133.
† *Data of Ethics*, p. 20.

mistake.' Maintaining, then, that evolution is on the whole beneficent, it follows that actions which conduce to pleasure-on-the-whole will rightly attach to themselves the idea of virtue, and the pain-producing actions—which tend to suppress vital activity—will be regarded as vicious. Thus emerges a 'rational' explanation of the moral qualities. We shall co-operate with the evolutionary process by being moderately egoistic and moderately altruistic.* It might perhaps be supposed that such a nicely balanced calculation of utilities would be unlikely to check effectively the egoistic propensions, or to adequately stimulate the altruistic sentiments. This consideration, however, is dismissed as he reflects that the course of evolution, which is *ex hypothesi* beneficent, may be relied on to do for us what we may be unable or unwilling to do for ourselves. 'Conduct,' which is a word we usually apply only to human beings, or to the lower animals which by domestication seem to adopt some rudimentary ethical sense, is attributed by Spencer to the cephalopod, and even to 'a low mollusc, such as the floating ascidian.'† Having defined conduct as 'the adjusting of acts to ends,' he uses the word to cover acts which by no stretch of imagination can be conceived as ethical; and then human conduct is supposed to be accounted

* *Data of Ethics*, pp. 169, 183. † *Ibid.*, p. 8.

for by the evolution of this non-ethical 'conduct.' But this is to smuggle the conclusion into the premises by an ambiguous use of the word 'conduct,' which is made to include two fundamentally inconsistent notions. This inconsistency mars a work otherwise admirable; and the climax is reached when we are told that as the outcome of individualistic Industrialism the world is moving towards such an orgy of altruism that 'the desire for it by everyone will so increase, and the sphere of exercise for it will so decrease, as to involve an altruistic competition similar to the existing egoistic competition.' But the 'latter part of his commonwealth forgets the beginning.' The only proof that the higher ethic will spontaneously evolve from the primitive 'conduct' of the mollusc in seizing its prey and propagating its kind is the fact that among some highly-developed human beings this higher ethic exists, and *must* have arisen *ex hypothesi* in the course of evolution. Thus the question to be solved is assumed as the basis of the whole argument.

The conclusion to which we seem to be led is (1) that any reasonable system of ethics must depend upon a moral order which is as far removed from utility as from necessity, whose essence lies in freedom and responsibility; and (2) this moral order cannot be justified—though it may be believed in and acted on by a kind of intuition

—apart from a Theistic interpretation of the universe. And conscience, if it is to possess authority, demands not only that a moral order should exist, but that it should be justified by being referred to a *Purpose*—in other words, to a Divine will.

CHAPTER IX

AUTHORITY OF CONSCIENCE

We have argued that conscience, as an active energy, depends upon faith in the moral order of the universe. This faith is intuitive, instinctive; it is, strictly speaking, a postulate, for it conditions all our thinking. We are so constituted as to believe that the Universe is *trustworthy*; that in the last resort it will not play us false. This belief alone saves us from a paralysing scepticism, and is implicit in the idea of causation. It is *faith*, rather than logical inference, which is at the bottom of this conviction—a conviction which may be assumed to be common to all minds that are sane. If the Universe be radically untrustworthy, we live, not in a cosmos, but a chaos, where anything may be true or false, or both at once.

If I ask myself the ultimate question, 'Why should I feel sure that—though I may never reach it—there is such a thing as the Truth of things in which the mind may rest?' I find that I must by a resolute act of my will *believe it*, before I can have the experience which will prove it to me. This is the starting-point of the scientific

inquirer no less than of the theologian. 'We do not believe the world to be governed by immutable law because our experiences appear to be regular; but we believe that our experiences, in spite of their apparent irregularity, follow some (perhaps) unknown rule because we first believe the world to be governed by immutable law. But this is as much as to say that the principle is not proved by experience, but that experience is understood in the light of the principle.'*

Again, if we ask the cognate question, 'Why should the intellect of man lead to Truth, supposing that there is a Truth to be sought?' There appears to be no answer apart from the postulate of a moral order. M. Bergson has lately emphasised what was pointed out by Mr. Balfour as long ago as 1895—viz., that 'from the point of view of organic evolution there is no distinction [I imagine] to be drawn between the development of reason and any other faculty, physiological or psychical, by which the interests of the individual or the race are promoted. From the humblest forms of nervous irritability at one end of the scale, to the reasoning capacity of the most advanced races at the other, everything, without exception—sensation, instinct, desire, volition—has been produced, directly or indirectly, by natural causes acting for the

* A. Balfour, *Foundations of Belief*, p. 140.

most part on strictly utilitarian principles. Convenience, not knowledge, therefore, has been the main end to which this process has tended.'* Mr. Balfour modestly says that this train of thought has long interested him, 'though it never seems to have interested anyone else.'† If this is so, it must be put down to the account of our stupidity; for the question is fundamental, and affects the reality, and even the possibility, of knowledge. The intellect, M. Bergson says,‡ is adapted by the course of development to give us a hold upon matter; it is most at home in what can be weighed and measured; it is unfitted to attain to Truth, for the simple reason that it aims at the useful—viz., the enlargement of our powers of dealing with matter.

If we are still stubbornly convinced that there is such a thing as Truth—intellectual or moral—and that our highest happiness consists in the quest of it, it must be because of our invincible faith in a moral order. And granting faith in this order—both physical and moral—to be a necessity of our thought, we shall agree with Professor Fraser,§ 'that faith in the fundamental divinity or goodness of the universe is pre-

* A. Balfour, *Foundations of Belief*, p. 72.
† A. Balfour, *Essays and Addresses*, p. 409.
‡ H. Bergson, *Creative Evolution*.
§ A. C. Fraser, *Berkeley's Works*, note on p. 345.

supposed in interpretation of nature, which proceeds on the postulate of universal order; and this implies the moral trustworthiness of the world which we begin to realise when we begin to be conscious. That we are living and having our being in omnipotent goodness is thus not an inference, but the implied basis of all real inferences. We cannot prove GOD—for we must assume GOD, as the basis of all proof. Faith, even in the uniformity of nature, is virtually faith in omnipotent goodness immanent in the universe.'

If this argument is valid—and, though it may be denied, it seems increasingly difficult to refute—it throws light on the authority of conscience. When I say, *Credo in unum Deum, Patrem omnipotentem*, I am explicitly pledging myself to a belief in 'omnipotent goodness immanent in the universe,' in the 'absolute trustworthiness of the Power universally at work.'* From this Power, which I am compelled to conceive as Personal (in the sense that Purpose and Will are necessarily implied in omnipotent goodness), I cannot divorce my own personality, which owes its existence to this Power. And conscience, which is my whole personality acting ethically, can derive its authority from no other source. Even though it may be said that we give the name of conscience to the reaction of

* A. C. Fraser, *Berkeley's Works*, p. 161.

our personality to a standard conceived as human, yet the human standard does not come to us 'in utter nakedness,' but trails some clouds of glory from its Divine original. In this sense we may accept the dictum of Bishop Butler, 'The obligation to obey the law [of conscience] is its being the law of your nature.'* As we are bound to trust Reason in the intellectual sphere, so we are bound to trust conscience in the moral sphere. To deny the authority of the one or the other is to distrust the Power in whom physical and moral law have their source. The authority of conscience is thus paramount for the individual; it will be better for me to do what is objectively wrong, but what I conscientiously believe to be right, than to do what is in fact right, but what my conscience disapproves. And the reason is that to distrust and disobey conscience is an act of disloyalty to my personality; it is a kind of moral suicide. Conscience will work itself clear of error in proportion as it is used and trusted, just as intellectual truth is attained by the exhaustion of error. 'Conscience does not only offer itself to show us the way we should walk in, but it likewise carries its own authority with it, that it is our natural guide—the guide assigned to us by the Author of our nature: it therefore belongs to our condition of being: it is our duty to

* J. Butler, *Sermons*, iii., p. 54.

walk in that path and to follow this guide.'* Though the actual verdict which conscience may give in any particular circumstances is conditioned by the moral standard generally prevailing, yet the essential thing is, not the verdict, but the *motive* which underlies it; and the motive must be that we shall allow the Divine Purpose to move freely through the human personality. When by an act of will—or faith—I surrender myself to the impulse 'to throw myself back upon a Power greater than myself, and have the perfectly sure sense that that Power has received and is supporting me,'† I believe that I am in contact with the Source of the Moral Law; and I must be true to it—I must obey conscience—though the heavens fall. For me, my motive is everything.

We find an agreement among ethical writers otherwise widely opposed as to the fundamental importance of the motive. Spencer says: 'Every moment we pass instantly from men's perceived actions to the motives implied by them, and so are led to formulate these actions in mental terms rather than in bodily terms.' Sir Leslie Stephen declares: 'A genuine moral law distinguishes classes of conduct, not according to external circumstances, but according to the motives involved; and

* J. Butler, *Sermons*, iii., p. 54.

† W. Temple, *The Faith and Modern Thought*, p. 8.

therefore when conformity to the law is only external, it is more proper to say that it is not conformity at all.' And T. H. Green insists 'that it is not by the outward form that we know what moral action is. We know it, so to speak, on the inner side.'* And Dr. Martineau, in bringing together these passages, remarks that 'this principle carries its own evidence with it, and neither requires nor admits of further proof: and is a characteristic of Christian ethics which finds its most solemn expression in the Sermon on the Mount, where the eye of lust and the heart of hate are called to account with the adulterer and the murderer.'† Martensen deals in a similar way with the authority of conscience: 'In conscience we perceive an evidence which cannot be rejected, independent of ourselves, of a permanent relation of dependence in which we are placed—an evidence which permits man to perceive in his inmost being the existence of a superhuman, supramundane principle, superior to that of the creature—a light which shines in the darkness, though the darkness perceiveth it not: and which also assures him that this consciousness of his of an invisible authority in his inner being does not originate in himself, nor in the world and his consciousness concerning the world, but is effected,

* See Martineau, *Types of Ethical Theory*, vol. ii., p. 24.

† *Ibid.*, p. 27.

is given to him, *by this authority itself:* assures him that it is not merely he who is acquainted with the law and his relation to the law, but that he and his relation to the law *are known* by the higher power—namely, by the Creator. Therefore we say that conscience is a fundamental form of man's personal consciousness of eternity; that ineffaceable certainty that the relation of Duty, with Responsibility and Judgment, is not a relation which stands and falls with our relations to the world and to men, but in its essence is a relation to the holy and almighty GOD: that even if we were denuded of all our worldly relations, of all our relations to men (which befalls each of us at death), still this fundamental supramundane relation would continue to exist: still by virtue of this indissoluble *copula* of conscience we should find ourselves in presence of the holy GOD, and placed before His bar of judgment. At this judgment-bar we already appear in the present life when we, withdrawing from all worldly relations, enter the sanctuary of our conscience.'*

Additional force seems to be given to this way of regarding the authority of conscience if we consider that its activity is set in motion by an impulse from the Divine Personality. This impulse desires to pass freely, but is thwarted, in our ex-

* Martensen, *Christian Ethics*, p. 360.

perience, by human obstructions, and especially by the obstruction we call Sin. Hence arises our painful feeling of effort, of failure, of a conflict between aspiration and achievement; of missing a mark and transgressing a law. But the impulse is there, and our duty is to give it free passage. M. Bergson has compared Life itself to a great wave spreading from a centre. In the direction of humanity and consciousness alone the impulse has passed freely. From the Source of this impulse—which he does not hesitate to name as GOD—comes the 'enormous push' which life exhibits. Hence arises the otherwise strange fact that small inventions or discoveries prove to have world-transforming potentialities. The discovery of a fact or a truth does not produce all that flows from it. It only, so to speak, clears the way, and thus unseals the fountain, enabling the impulse to find vent. An illustration may be given from man's latest discovery—viz., the art of flying. It is only at present in its elementary stage, being little more than a decade old; yet already it promises to entirely alter the science of war, and possibly—by annihilating natural boundaries—to make it eventually impracticable. It is probable that in fifty years it will entirely transform our methods of traction and locomotion, with the most surprising effects on international trade and the movements of population.

How did all this that we see, and foresee, arise? About the year 1888 Mr. Dunlop is said to have been watching his little boy riding his bicycle, when the idea occurred to him that the child would go more comfortably if he could ride, not on a solid, but on an inflated tyre. Here was the beginning of the pneumatic tyre—a toy for a child. From this it was but a step to the motor-car; for with the reduction of vibration to a minimum a motor-engine could be fixed which would run rapidly without shaking the car (and its occupant) unduly. This in turn gave an impetus to the invention of the light engine, driven, not by steam, but petrol; the lighter the engine, the less wear and tear, and the greater the speed. The great difficulty in the way of flying—hitherto insuperable—had been the weight of any engine powerful enough to raise and drive a machine through the air. The petrol-engine, perfected year by year as motoring increased, provided a light and powerful dynamic which was exactly the need of the inventor of the aeroplane. The astonishing results above indicated are thus traced to the notion which crossed the mind of a parent in an idle hour, as he watched his boy at play. Was this the *cause* or only the occasion of the invention? Do we not feel, with M. Bergson,* 'that between the effect and the cause the dis-

* H. Bergson, *Creative Evolution*, p. 193.

proportion is so great that it is difficult to regard the cause as *producer* of its effect. Everything happens as though the grip of intelligence on matter were, in its main intention, to *let something pass* that matter is holding back.'

To the Theist the source of the physical order is one with the source of the moral order; he holds, as Martensen* says, that 'the law of morality is also *the law of the World*, the inmost law of history,' whereas 'to the fatalist the GOD of conscience is not the Almighty.' If this be so—and I think M. Bergson, from his purely philosophical standpoint, would admit it—the moral order consists in the will of GOD passing freely through the human personality. The conscience is not the *cause* of the moral law, but only its occasion. Those individuals are most spiritual who fully surrender themselves to the Divine impulse; through whom the DIVINE SPIRIT passes with the least hindrance. By a 'renewing of the mind,' which is at the same time a process of inward cleansing of the personality, the self-regarding impulses are dislodged, and the influence streams through. Every man who thus hears and obeys the voice of conscience gives GOD the opportunity—if the expression may pass—for further extensions of the moral

* Martensen, *Christian Ethics*.

law. Historically this has been the case, notably in the great days of the expansion of Christianity at the beginning of our era. And the authority of conscience thus conceived would seem to be not without human dignity and Divine sanction.

CHAPTER X

THE FUNCTION OF CONSCIENCE

HITHERTO we have considered conscience as a personal possession—as the offspring, or rather the upspringing, of our personality. It seemed necessary to approach the subject first from this point of view; otherwise conscience might be dissolved into a mere sentiment, existing as a kind of diffused 'public opinion.'

But, as a matter of fact, in our experience personality is never solitary. As it cannot ideally be conceived apart from GOD, so in the earthly life it cannot be realised apart from society; the organism and the environment are both presupposed in experience: personality cannot act in a void. 'Man,' as Aristotle said, 'is a social animal.' Hobbes's theory of primitive man as a solitary savage at war with his kind is as much at variance with the indications of anthropology as Rousseau's theory of a 'social contract,' supposed to arise from a conscious bargaining among the members of an early tribe. A solitary person—like Enoch Arden on his lonely island—would be in great danger of be-

coming a maniac or imbecile. And the 'social contract' theory is so directly the reverse of the truth, that unless there were a society—were it only the commonwealth of Adam and Eve—the individual could never have come into his rights. From birth to death we are never alone. To the self-centred individualist we may say: 'Other men laboured, and you have entered into their labours. Other men's hands built the house you live in; it was ready for you when you came. When you arrived (most probably in a very bad temper) at the Traveller's Rest we call "home," you found a warm bath awaiting you and a warm fire to dress by. And at every hour society has surrounded you. Men whose names you will never know made the roads, bridged the river, drained the fen, and raised the steady fabric of human society; even at this moment men are sweating and toiling for you—in mine and quarry and factory and dockyard, on the farm and in the deep—that you may be fed and clothed and housed in security.' In early group life the individual was nothing, the tribe was everything; or, rather, the desire of the individual for his own good had to be subordinated to the welfare of the tribe of which he was a part.* And the first ethical impulses—the beginnings of conscience—were grounded in the sanctions of

* See Dewey and Tufts, *Ethics*.

religion. 'Morality did not begin by one man saying to another, "I will not hit you if you do not hit me"; there is no trace of such a transaction. There *is* a trace of both men having said, "We must not hit each other in the Holy Place." They gained their morality by guarding their religion. They did not cultivate courage; they fought for the shrine, and found that they had become courageous. They did not cultivate cleanliness; they purified themselves for the altar, and found that they were clean.'*

Conscience developed *pari passu* with personality. As the conception of himself as a person worked itself clear in consciousness, the individual felt that, as he had rights to share in what belonged to the tribe, he had also duties which he was bound in honour to render. For rights and duties are reciprocal terms. And the root-idea of a person—*persona*, πρόσωπον—seems to be that of one who has rights, and therefore duties. 'Slaves, as not possessing any rights of citizenship, were regarded by Roman law as not having *persona*; they were ἀπρόσωποι, or *personâ carentes*.'†

Conscience therefore 'grows with the growth and strengthens with the strength' of personality. It has a social function,

* G. K. Chesterton, *Orthodoxy*, p. 121.

† Dr. Bethune-Baker, *Texts and Studies*, vol. vii., p. 70.

which may be formulated thus: *the function of conscience is to lead the individual to serve society when self-interest conflicts with social welfare.*

We cannot conceive a time, however remote, when virtue and happiness, goodness and utility, sacrifice and selfishness, altruism and egoism, *coincided.* We may search the past or explore the future in vain for such a golden age. Herbert Spencer has indeed prophesied that such a time is coming; he thought that, since it is an undoubted fact that difficult things become easy by the habit of doing them, and even painful things pleasant if we persevere long enough at them, so at last self-sacrifice will provide a balance of pleasure to the doer, and self-seeking become distasteful. But the man who stops to calculate remote chances of utility never does an heroic deed; the calculation of profit is the negation of the spirit of sacrifice; the moment a man suspects that he is only looking after his own interest, the impulse of sacrifice is dead.

It is no flowery path which will lead to such a goal. The most strenuous labours are necessary if (on earth) mankind are even to approximate to it. Systems of philosophy and ethics, the exhortations of moralists and divines, the counsels of education, the unwritten law of custom, the spur of patriotism—all these are insufficient

to coerce the individual to serve his fellows when his own advantage conflicts with theirs. History is there to show the force of the current against which the altruist has to struggle; he must develop every foot-pound of energy which he possesses, or the tide will sweep him away.

Kant gave noble expression to the ideal which should characterise a man's duty towards his fellows: 'Act so as to treat humanity, whether in thine own person or in that of any other, in every case as an *end*, never as a means only'; and, 'Act only on that maxim which at the same time thou canst will to be a universal law.' But it is to be suspected that the dictum has received more admiration than imitation. *Naturam expellas furcâ tamen usque recurret.* The instincts of self-preservation and self-interest are, necessarily, so deeply rooted in human nature that the 'other-regarding' instincts cannot hold their own without a struggle.

Yet the struggle has been maintained, and altruism now occupies large fields of human endeavour. To ameliorate the conditions of our mortal lot, 'to leave the world a little better than we found it,' to serve society—this is on all hands recognised as a duty, even by those who do not trace the idea of duty to a Divine source. It may even be argued that the poignant sense of loss experienced by those who

have surrendered the belief in a Divine Providence drives them to 'work while it is day' with an unsparing devotion to which many of the orthodox are strangers. Certainly the apostles of 'the religion of humanity' would indignantly deny that the absence of Theistic belief in any degree weakened their philanthropic and humanitarian zeal. They would agree with Adam Smith, that we have the power of standing, so to speak, outside ourselves, thus adopting the point of view of an 'impartial spectator,' and forming what may be called a 'social standard,' which enables us to judge ourselves from the standpoint of society.

Now, there can be no doubt that this power of so limiting our natural egoism as to be able to adopt the point of view of another, and so to enter by sympathy into his feelings, received an enormous impetus at the beginning of the Christian era. It is not only that CHRIST taught mankind that our duty is to love our neighbour as ourself, and explained 'neighbour'—in sharp contrast to the doctrine of the Jewish rabbis—as anyone who needs our help, be he heretic or heathen: He also exhibited in His own person the perfection of self-sacrificing love. Therefore, as Harnack has pointed out, His followers held that ministering love is the expression of our love to GOD. The belief that GOD is Love; that the Divine love—like the

highest human love—must pour itself forth in sacrifice: this was their doctrine, their incentive, their inspiration. This quickened conscience, and revealed unsuspected depths in personality. What was practically a new conception of the Godhead brought with it a new conception of manhood. And both found their centre in the fact of CHRIST. The Incarnation, accepted by the intellect, welcomed by the heart, was itself the proof to the Christian consciousness that

> the all-great is the all-loving too:
> So through the thunder comes a Human Voice,
> Saying: 'O heart I made, a Heart beats here:
> Face My Hands fashioned, see it in Myself:
> Thou hast no power, nor mayest conceive of Mine;
> But love I gave thee, with Myself to love,
> And thou must love Me who have died for thee.'

While the Church was working out, in the articulation of her Creeds, what was implied in her new thought of GOD, and of the relation of the Godhead to the manhood in CHRIST, it was inevitable that the old question, 'What is man?' should be asked again, and answered in the light of the new truth. When self-sacrificing Love was conceived as of the very essence of Godhead—and the controversial battles of the fourth century, dealing with the relations of the FATHER to the SON, had this for their centre—then man sought to find this same

spirit in himself. He found it, and felt that his creed gave it scope and justification: and the history of the Church is there to witness to the new direction which thought and life assumed in consequence. That GOD—if the phrase may be permitted—*had a conscience;* that He cared for man more than He cared for 'His own glory'; that He would not shrink from self-sacrifice and humiliation for the sake of others—all this was bound to work nothing less than a revolution in man's thought of GOD and of himself. To be 'imitators of GOD, as dear children,' became an ideal for conduct, intensely unworldly and intensely practical to all who felt the afflation of the spirit of CHRIST.

We are not concerned to deny that unselfishness, or altruism, existed prior to Christianity. When Athanasius brought the whole force of his intellect to refute the Arian doctrine that 'there was a time when CHRIST was not': ἦν ποτε ὅτε οὐκ ἦν: this was no mere battle of words. If CHRIST was co-eternal with the FATHER, then the character of GOD, which was revealed in the Incarnation, was essentially one with the character of CHRIST—self-sacrificing love was of its essence from eternity. It was at bottom a moral principle that was at stake, nothing less than the real meaning of character and personality. The future of the conscience was

involved in it. If GOD were the great Egoist, and afterwards became altruistic, then altruism was not of the essence of the Divine Personality—nor, consequently, of the human personality. The doctrine of the eternal generation of the SON had therefore a moral even more than a theological importance.

The deepening and softening of character, or, in other words, the rise and progress of altruism, in our Western civilisation, were described and traced to their source by Dr. B. Kidd a generation ago, in a work* which is now seldom discussed, because its substance has passed into our thought. The book might be described as a history of the development of conscience—social and individual—in response to the ideals of Christianity. He showed us the very function of conscience, as above described—viz., 'to lead the individual to serve society when self-interest conflicts with social welfare.' The course of his argument may be briefly indicated as follows:

1. The distinguishing feature of human history is the social development the race is undergoing.

2. The characteristic feature of this development is the relationship of the individual to society.

3. The interests of the individual and

* B. Kidd, *Social Evolution.*

those of the social organism, in the evolution which is proceeding, are not either identical or capable of being reconciled; as has been necessarily assumed in all those systems of ethics which have sought to establish a rational sanction for individual conduct.

4. The social system which constitutes an organic growth must be the social system or type of civilisation founded on a form of religious belief. Throughout its existence there is maintained within it a conflict of two opposing forces: the disintegrating principle represented by the rational self-assertiveness of the individual units; the integrating principle represented by a religious belief providing a sanction for social conduct which is always of necessity ultrarational.

5. The function of Religion is to provide an ultrarational sanction for that large class of conduct in the individual where his interests and the interests of the social organism are antagonistic, and by which the former are rendered subordinate to the latter in the general interests of the evolution which the race is undergoing.

6. The evolution which is slowly proceeding in human society is not primarily intellectual (individualistic), but religious (social) in character.

7. It is the fund of altruism—springing in our case from the acceptance of the

suprarational sanctions of Christianity—which has alone made possible, through the deepening and softening of character, that developmental movement by which all the people are being slowly brought into the rivalry of life on equal conditions.

8. The most distinctive feature of human evolution as a whole is that, through the operation of the law of natural selection, the race must grow ever more and more religious.

9. The winning races have been those in which, other things being equal, this character has been most fully developed.

These propositions would probably be now more generally accepted than they were in 1894. The views of Mr. Balfour and Professors Eucken and Bergson, referred to above, have strengthened the main thesis embodied in *Social Evolution*. No doubt speculative difficulties may still be raised. It is difficult to see, *e.g.*, how altruism (amounting in many cases to self-effacement) can propagate itself as a predominant type of character in an evolutionary struggle through natural selection. It would seem that the less self-assertive should die out in the struggle for life. Mr. Kidd would reply 'that the social system which contained the largest number of individuals whose present self-effacement works towards the larger ultimate good of that social system must always be the

winning type in the long-run.' And this is so if sufficient time is given.

Yet the irruption of a less civilised society organised on a war basis is at least a possibility, and might break up the altruistic society before its principles obtained sufficient strength. This seems to be the real difficulty in the way of the establishment of a State on Socialistic lines, unless the whole world should adopt it simultaneously. Yet altruism—in spite of theoretical difficulties—has grown and is growing. 'In our Western civilisation the social type in which the individual capacity for self-effacement is highly developed is over-running the world.'*

It would appear, therefore, that the development of conscience, in response to sanctions recognised as of Divine authority, has been the prime factor in our Western civilisation, as far as its 'progress' has real significance. Why should I throw myself into this movement? Why should I, against my interest, take the side of the disinherited? Why should I struggle to maintain a family, while my neighbour (by judicious restriction) modifies the severity of the rigour of existence? Or why should I refrain from marriage because of some suspected mental taint in my heredity? Why should I in any of the relations of

* This was Mr. Kidd's reply to the above problem which I submitted to him in October, 1895.

life sacrifice myself for a future which I cannot foresee? It is the function of conscience to answer such questions, and to supply the motive which alone can make the answer effective.

CHAPTER XI

THE MEANING OF OBLIGATION

THE tendency of our social development, summarised in the last chapter, is to restrict the area of individual rights—under the influence of the Christian ideal—and to enlarge the area of duties. The function of conscience is to strengthen the sanctions of duty, as against the claim of rights. Kant's categorical imperative is only a statement in terms of philosophy of the Golden Rule expressed in the Sermon on the Mount.

It seems necessary, therefore, to ask, What is the meaning of obligation, and how does the sense of duty manifest itself? The answer would appear to be that *when we see a standard of conduct, and approve it, the sense of obligation arises.* Professor Dewey* states the matter thus: 'Any being who is capable of putting before himself ideas as motives of conduct, who is capable of forming a conception of something which he would realise, is, by that very fact, capable of a sense of obligation.

* Dewey, *Outlines of Ethics*, quoted by D'Arcy, *Short Study of Ethics*, pp. 139, 140.

Indeed, just as every judgment about existent fact naturally takes the form, "S is P," so every judgment regarding an activity which executes an idea takes the form "S ought (or ought not) to be P." It is the very essence of theoretical judgment—judgment regarding fact—to state truth; what *is*. And it is the very essence of practical judgment—judgment regarding deeds—to state that active relation which we call obligation; what *ought to be*. The judgment as to what a practical situation *is* is an untrue or abstract judgment. The practical situation is itself an *activity :* the needs, powers, and circumstances, which make it are moving on. At no instant in time is the scene quiescent. But the agent, in order to determine his course of action in view of the situation, has to *fix* it: he has to arrest its onward movement in order to tell what it is. So his abstracting intellect cuts a cross-section through its ongoing, and says: "This is the situation." Now, the judgment, "This ought to be the situation," or "In view of the situation my conduct ought to be *thus* and *so*," is simply restoring the movement which the mind has temporarily put out of sight. By means of its cross-section intelligence has detected the principle, or law of movement, of the situation: and it is on the basis of this movement that conscience declares what *ought to be*."

This way of regarding the meaning of obligation, and the manner in which the sense of duty arises in consciousness, is strikingly confirmed by M. Bergson's account of the working of Intellect and Intuition. He maintains (it will be remembered) that Reality is a true evolution—a movement, a flowing. The intellect, for its own purposes—which are essentially practical—takes 'snap-shots' of the movement which is Life, and fixes a view of it. But it never gives us reality, because the Real never stands still to be photographed by the intellect. (Hence natural sciences may be perfectly right in every particular, and perfectly wrong in the general.) The instantaneous photographs so common in our illustrated papers are grotesquely unlike what we ever really see; no man ever walked, no horse ever galloped, with such jerky irregularity. But put a number of successive snap-shots side by side, and restore the movement—as in the bioscope—and at once you recognise the truth of the scene.

The intellect cuts out sections regarded as fixed; intuition 'restores the movement which the mind had temporarily put out of sight.'

It would be generally admitted that conscience is more akin to intuition than to intelligence. This was the burden of Mr. Kidd's message—viz., that the evolution

which is proceeding is not primarily intellectual, but social and spiritual—or, as we may say, intuitive and instinctive. And we now see why it is so. *We get into touch with Reality rather by instinct than by reason.* But if this is so, a new light is thrown upon the meaning of obligation: we are more sure of duty than we can ever be of any matter of fact. Facts are stubborn things; but just because they are *things* they may be broken up, or worn down by attrition: while duty is an absolute, because it is not a *thing*, but an activity.

When we are conscious of a standard which approves itself to our judgment, the sense of *what ought to be* is at once aroused. I am working, *e.g.*, at my bench; I am trying to get the top of a bracket perfectly square and flat. I bring the T-square to test it. I say, 'This surface is uneven—this line is crooked'; and at once there arises the judgment, 'It ought to be straight.' I judge thus because there is a norm or standard to which I wish to approximate. Without such a standard there would be no conflict present to my mind between the material—what is—and the form which ought to be; but which in this instance (owing to my incapacity for this work) will fail to take shape.

Or take such a proposition as the following: 'A Boy Scout does "a good turn"

to someone every day.' Here is a moral obligation — for Scouts — couched in the form of an assertion of fact. To be a scout is, according to the definition, to do daily 'a good turn.' When a lad is enrolled in a troop, he is at once aware of the obligation: 'I am a scout, and the essence of being a scout is to fulfil an obligation.' There seem to be three steps in the process: (1) The standard or norm of the ideal scout is presented to the mental imagination (it may take the form of someone whom the lad regards as a hero); (2) the standard of conduct exemplified in the ideal approves itself to the lad as good and desirable; (3) the moral imperative, 'Go and do thou likewise,' arises in consequence.

It is probably because the sense of obligation arises in this way that the compilers—though unaware of the subtleties of 'psychology'—drew up the Church Catechism in a form altogether admirable. (1) A standard, norm or ideal is first insisted on: 'In my Baptism I was made a member of CHRIST, the child of GOD, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven.' (2) The standard is assumed to approve itself to the child as good and desirable. (3) There hereupon arises the sense of obligation: 'Dost thou not think that thou art *bound* to believe and to do as they have promised for thee?' 'Yes, verily, and by

God's help so I will.' Of course, it may be argued that the standard of conduct which we approve, and on which the sense of obligation supervenes, is merely the effect of *custom*. If this were so, the sense of obligation would be fallacious, because it would be based on a conventional standard of which nothing ethical could be predicated. We call a certain landscape or a certain type of face or fashion *beautiful*, a certain kind of conduct *right*. Why? It may be said, in the first case, that the eye objects to the unusual, and approves what is habitual. For example, when a new fashion appears in the streets, most people think it 'odd,' and some call it hideous. Yet, if it prevails, in a few months our eyes grow so accustomed to the new shape that no woman who wishes to be well-dressed will appear in public without some approximation to the new style; and, further, she will approve what she before regarded with aversion: what we call 'taste' changes with the change of fashion. Custom may be said in a greater degree to be the origin of our sense of beauty in natural objects or in the human countenance. Hills, which at first simply aroused a feeling of security as a refuge from enemies, are now regarded as possessing intrinsic beauty, and awaken æsthetic approval; a well-watered plain, which once attracted roving tribes in search of food,

comes, by association of ideas, to be delightful in itself. Such is the force of habit and association. A European admires the Caucasian type of features, which to a Mongolian or Negro might appear actually repulsive. The unusual and unaccustomed gives an unpleasing shock by contradicting expectation.

May not our approval or disapproval of a certain type of conduct be likewise at bottom a mere matter of 'taste'—rooted in habit—an expectation of similarity and an aversion from dissimilarity?

The answer to this question seems to be—We find, on reflection, that we admire things by referring them to a normal standard. (1) At the back of changing fashions we have a desire for fitness—that the human body may be suitably clothed for its different avocations; that furniture may the better serve the purposes for which it was made; that architecture may be in keeping with its surroundings, and answer its requirements. (2) What we admire in a human face is generally an indication of a certain type of character which pleases us. (3) Nature, in its change of atmospheric effects, moves us by awakening moral or spiritual feelings. Our admiration of mountain or plain, 'though' (as Martineau says*) 'often addressing itself to the outer face of

* Martineau, *Types of Ethical Theory*, vol. ii., p. 21.

things, is really moved by the spirit which they seem to manifest. If the rock is *stern*, if the stream is *joyous*, if the star is *mild*, it is because the inner heart of Nature is felt to speak through them, and hold communion with us; and only in proportion as we lift the external world into this *personal* element can such language appear justified. . . . That we give these words to things, and then first feel their true nature struck, only proves how ready we are to refer back all things to a personal Being behind them.'

The meaning of 'obligation,' therefore—if the term is to retain its ethical meaning—points to a standard, and depends upon it: in æsthetics, Beauty; in morals, Truth; in religion, Holiness. We cannot advance towards a goal which shifts with custom or fashion; that progress may be a movement, the ideal must be unchanging and abiding.

CHAPTER XII

CONSCIENCE AND THE NEW TESTAMENT

THERE can be no doubt that the advent of Christianity gave an enormous impetus to the sense of duty through the quickening of the individual conscience: the new instinct of brotherhood sprang from the new conception of Fatherhood. 'One is your Father,' was the premise; 'all ye are brethren,' the logical conclusion. In words which have become classic, Dr. B. Kidd* describes the transformation: 'The new force which was born into the world with the Christian religion was from the first of immeasurable social significance. The original impetus was immense. The amorphous vigour of life was so great that several centuries have to pass away before any clear idea can be obtained of even the outlines of the growth which it was destined to build up out of the dead elements around it. The constructive principle of life was unmistakable; men seemed to be transformed; the ordinary motives of the individual mind appeared to be extinguished. . . . At a time when the military

* B. Kidd, *Social Evolution*, p. 123.

organisation of society still outwardly retained a scarcely diminished influence over the Western mind, the act which became typical of the higher life was to wash the feet of social inferiors and beggars. . . . In an age of turbulence and war, and while force continued to be everywhere triumphant, the uncompromising doctrine of the innate equality of men was slowly producing the most pregnant and remarkable change that has ever passed over the minds of a large section of the race. Even the all-powerful ruling classes could not remain permanently unaffected by a voice which, taking them generation after generation in their triumphs and pleasures as well as in their most impressionable moments, whispered with all the weight of the most absolute and unquestioned authority that they were in reality of the same clay as other men, and that in the eyes of a higher Power they stood on a footing of native equality with even the lowest of the earth.'

In the New Testament writings we may trace the fact of conscience, the obligations of conscience, and the authority of conscience, coming into clear light. The New Testament writers 'found the word συνείδησις ready to their hand. The earliest occurrence of the word is in certain fragments attributed to Periander and Bias, wise men of Greece. The neuter τὸ συνειδός is used in Plutarch. In Diogenes

Laertius the word συνείδησις occurs in the sense of self-consciousness; and in Dionysius Halicarnassus the full meaning of the word is brought out in the striking expression, 'Best of all is it never willingly to lie nor to defile one's own conscience.' If we may assume that the Book of Wisdom was written before any of the books of the New Testament, the passage xvii. 11 is the clearest instance of the preparation of the word for Christian use: 'Wickedness, condemned by her own witness and being pressed with conscience, always forecasteth grievous things.'*

The word occurs thirty times in the Acts and Epistles; it is not found in the Gospels. Yet the fact is presupposed, as in the case of Herod and S. Peter. The guilty conscience has never been more clearly portrayed than in Herod's imagination of a ghost walking at noonday: 'It is John whom I beheaded; he is risen from the dead' (S. Mark vi. 16). And we are aware of conscience at work in S. Peter when 'the LORD turned and looked upon him, and he went out and wept bitterly' (S. Matt. xxvi. 75). Though our LORD never uses the word, He distinctly and habitually appealed to the conscience of those who heard Him; 'He taught as one having authority,' in His sermons and parables

* See W. T. Davison, *The Christian Conscience*, p. 122.

(see the parable of the Unjust Judge in S. Luke xviii. 6). Note also the striking passage in S. Matthew (vi. 22, 23): 'The lamp of the body is the eye. If therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light; but if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!' And again: 'For this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the Truth. Every one that is of the Truth heareth My voice' (S. John xviii. 37) 'When CHRIST asserts His supremacy, and demands deference to Himself at all costs, He does so as the incarnation of the moral law. To be His friend is to be under His orders: "Ye are My friends if ye do whatsoever I command you" (S. John xv. 14); and one is bound to follow Him without regard to any claims that can be urged by self or kindred: "He that loveth father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me" (S. Matt. x. 37).'*

In the Acts the word occurs twice. When S. Paul was brought before the authorities at Jerusalem under the presidency of Ananias, he began his defence with the words: 'I have exercised my citizenship (πεπολίτευμαι) until this day with a good

* W. J. Henderson, art. in *Hastings' Dictionary*.

conscience on the whole (*πάσῃ συνειδήσει ἀγαθῇ*) in GOD'S sight.' It is noteworthy that he here connects the conscience, not with the inner sense of individual duty, but with the life of citizenship (Acts xxiii. 1). Five days later, when he was brought before Felix, S. Paul said: 'I exercise myself to have a conscience void of offence towards GOD and men' (*ἀσκῶ ἀπρόσκοπον συνείδησιν ἔχειν*); *ἄσκησις* means practice, exercise, training; and implies that conscience grows and strengthens with use.

In S. Paul's Epistles the word occurs somewhat frequently in the central group (1 and 2 Cor. and Rom.) and in the pastoral Epistles (1 and 2 Tim. and Tit.). 'The simplest use is that for direct personal knowledge with the *gen.* of the object (1 Cor. viii. 7, *εἰδώλου*), corresponding to *συνειδέναι τι* (1 Cor. iv. 4). The absolute use of the word presents various functions which the conscience fulfils.'* It is a *witness* to the holiness and sincerity of life of its possessor (*ὅτι ἐν ἁγιότητι καὶ εἰλικρινίᾳ τοῦ Θεοῦ ἀνευτράφημεν*), and the Apostle feels a glow of satisfaction upon its approval (*καύχησις*) (2 Cor. i. 12). It is also a *standard of action* to which the Apostle may appeal, sure of the approval of his converts: 'By manifestation of the truth commending ourselves

* Westcott, *Hebrews*, p. 293.

to every man's conscience in the sight of GOD' (*συνιστάνοντες ἑαυτοὺς πρὸς πᾶσαν συνείδησιν ἀνθρώπων ἐνώπιον τοῦ Θεοῦ*) (2 Cor. iv. 2). And again (2 Cor. v. 11): 'I hope we are made manifest in your consciences' (*ἐν ταῖς συνειδήσεσιν ὑμῶν*). Yet while it is a standard of action to the individual, it has no right to condemn those whose conscience comes to a different decision: 'If you go to a friend's house, eat without questioning whatever is set before you; but if you are told that anything has been offered in sacrifice, abstain from it; so as not to wound the conscience of your informant. Remember it is entirely for his sake that you abstain; for in the abstract it is not well that another's conscience should be scandalised by the liberty I exercise, or that what I receive as GOD'S gift should cause me to be maligned'* (1 Cor. x. 23-31).

Yet he whose conscience is enlightened and moves in the sphere of Christian liberty (*ἡ ἐξούσια ὑμῶν*) will strive to set his weak brother free from scruples which are due to a lingering pagan superstition, viz., the feelings associated with idol-worship. He will make it clear that 'meat commendeth us not to GOD; neither if we eat not are we the worse, nor if we eat are we the better' (1 Cor. viii. 8).

* Dummelow, *One Volume Bible Commentary*, p. 909.

If he is to guide the consciences of others, the Apostle must 'cleanse his conscience from dead works to serve the living GOD.' Because Christians are 'temples of the living God' (2 Cor. vi. 16), we must 'cleanse ourselves from all defilement of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of GOD' (2 Cor. vii. 1). 'The end of the Apostolic charge is love "out of a pure heart, and a good conscience (συνειδήσεως ἀγαθῆς) and faith unfeigned" (1 Tim. i. 5). Purity of personal character, rectitude of moral judgment, sincerity of trust in the unseen, form the triple foundation of active Christian work.'*

The Epistle to the Romans is the *locus classicus* of the development of the Christian conscience. In it we have the record of S. Paul's religious experience: his transition from the realm of Law to the realm of Grace. The problem was—given the desire to live according to Law, can a man find happiness in a life of obedience to Law? S. Paul, right up to his conversion, had steadily made the attempt; he could claim 'to have lived in all good conscience before GOD up to this day' (Acts xxiii. 1). He found it impossible; the Law, which was meant for life, he found to be deadly in its operation. For GOD'S verdict must pronounce righteous only those who have done what the Law commands. The

* Westcott, *Hebrews*, p. 293.

slightest breach of Law puts the transgressor into the dock, and in such a position, with GOD for Judge, happiness is out of the question. And the case is worse than this; he finds that the very fact that a certain course of action is forbidden excites a desire for it, which was dormant before. When a thing is forbidden—as we know very well in the case of children—the prohibition brings the idea of the thing forbidden into prominence, and thus defeats its object. To say 'don't fidget' suggests the idea of fidgeting. The Law, which was meant as a restraint on desire, acts by suggestion as an incentive: 'I had not known illicit desire, unless the Law had said, "Thou shalt not covet." Thus, while the Law in its purpose is "holy and just and good," its practical effect is to excite rebellion. Without the Law to bring it out, sin lies dead—inert and passive—and the individual lives in happy unconsciousness, following his inclinations with no pangs of conscience excited by Law. But sin took advantage of the commandment, and, by increasing my knowledge of right and inciting the desire of wrong, betrayed me so that I fell. The fault is not in the Law, which my better self—my moral nature—recognises as an obligation, but in some perversity within myself—viz., the sinful principle which masters my will. It is not the Law, and not my own deliberate

self, which is the cause of the evil—because my actions are executed blindly, with no proper concurrence of my will. I purpose one way, I act another. I hate a thing, but do it. And by this very fact, that I hate the thing that I do, my conscience bears testimony to the Law and recognises its excellence. In my innermost self—the thinking and reasoning part of me—I respond joyfully to the Law of GOD. But then I see a different Law dominating this bodily organism of mine, and making me do its behests. This other Law takes the field in arms against the Law of Reason and Conscience, and drags me away captive in the fetters of sin. Until a Deliverer comes —thank GOD, He has come—I am torn by conflicting impulses: with my conscience I serve the Law of GOD, with my bodily organism the Law of Sin.'

This was S. Paul's personal experience, as a strict and conscientious follower of Judaism. It led him to the verge of despair; the ideal of perfect obedience—and therefore of righteousness in the sight of GOD—was at once imperative and impossible. It would seem that the question, 'What advantage then hath the Jew?' must be answered with a decided negative. It would be better to live at random, in happy unconsciousness of Law, than to have a sword of Damocles hanging over one's head. But are the Gentiles in better

case? No; for though they have no written Law, they are not therefore outside the Divine government. Whenever they put in practice, instinctively, the precepts of the Law, their own moral sense supplies them with the Law they need. For their actions give visible proof of commandments written, not in stone, but on the tables of the heart. These actions themselves bear witness to them, and an approving conscience also bears them witness; while in their dealings with one another their inward thoughts take sometimes the side of the prosecution, and sometimes (but more rarely) of the defence. These hidden workings of the conscience GOD can see; and therefore He will judge Gentile as well as Jew at the Great Assize.

'The truth must be acknowledged: as a system, Law of whatever kind had failed. The breakdown of the Jewish Law was most complete, just because that Law was the best. On a large scale for the race, as on a small scale for the individual, *διὰ νόμου ἐπίγνωσις ἁμαρτίας*.

'Clearly, the fault of all this was not with the Law. The fault lay in the miserable weakness of human nature. The Law, as a code of commandments, did all that it was intended to do. But it needed to be supplemented. And it was just this supplementing which Christianity brought, and by bringing it set the Law in its true light

and in its right place in the evolution of the Divine plan. S. Paul sees spread before him the whole expanse of history. The dividing line across it is the Coming of the Messiah. All previous to that is a period of Law—first of imperfect Law, such Law as was supplied by natural religion and conscience; then of relatively perfect Law, the Law given by GOD from Sinai. It was not to be supposed that this gift of Law increased the sum of human happiness: rather the contrary. In the infancy of the world—as in the infancy of the individual—there was a blithe unconsciousness of right and wrong; impulse was followed wherever it led; the primrose path of enjoyment had no dark shadow cast over it. Law was this dark shadow. In proportion as it became stricter it deepened the gloom. . . . Any true happiness, therefore, any true relief, must be sought elsewhere. And it was this happiness and relief which S. Paul found in CHRIST. The last verse of chapter vii. marks the point at which the great burden which lay upon the conscience rolls away; and the next chapter begins with an uplifting of the heart in recovered peace and serenity: "There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in CHRIST JESUS." '*

The central importance of conscience in the Christian life is brought out from a

* Sanday and Headlam, *Romans*, p. 188.

different standpoint by the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, in relation to the Christian and pre-Christian idea of sacrifice. S. Paul's point of view is primarily ethical; that of *Hebrews* (so to speak) liturgical and ecclesiastical. The ancient sacrificial system is a foreshadowing of Christian realities —'a shadow of good things to come.' It points to a result which it is powerless to accomplish. The service of the Tabernacle was 'a parable of the time now present' (Heb. ix. 9). It was ceremonial rather than spiritual. These ordinances 'cannot, as touching the conscience' (*κατὰ συνείδησιν*), make the worshipper perfect. CHRIST'S Atonement, on the other hand, 'cleanses the conscience from dead works to serve the living GOD' (*καθαριεῖ τὴν συνείδησιν*). If the Jewish sacrifices had been more than typical, the worshippers, once cleansed, would have had no more conscience of sins (*μηδεμίαν ἔτι συνείδησιν ἁμαρτιῶν*). The repetition of the sacrifices proves their symbolical character. CHRIST, however, 'by one offering hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.' The new covenant is an inward process: 'I will put my laws on their heart, and upon their mind also will I write them' (Heb. x. 16). The Christian therefore can draw near to God in full assurance of faith, his heart being 'sprinkled from an evil conscience' (*ῥεραντισμένοι τὰς καρδίας ἀπὸ συνειδήσεως*

πονηρᾶς). A good conscience, guaranteed to the believer through the Laver of Regeneration (λελουμένοι τὸ σῶμα ὕδατι καθαρῷ), is our ground of confidence in approaching God, and in claiming the prayers of our believing brethren: 'Pray for us, for we are persuaded that we have a good conscience' (πειθόμεθα γὰρ ὅτι καλὴν συνείδησιν ἔχομεν), desiring to live honestly (καλῶς ἀναστρέφεσθαι) in all things' (Heb. xiii. 18). Westcott sums up the teaching of the Epistle on the conscience thus: 'Man has a sovereign power within him through which the Divine law finds a voice. He has a conscience whose judgments he can recognise as having final authority. He has conscience of sins (c. x. 2). He knows that certain acts are evil and that he is responsible for them. In such a state he has an "evil conscience" (c. x. 22). The conscience feels the defilement of "dead works," which counterfeit the fruits of its righteous claims on man's activity (c. ix. 14); and it furnishes the standard of that perfection towards which man aspires (c. ix. 9, κατὰ συνείδησιν τελειῶσαι).'*

In the pastoral Epistles of S. Paul the references to conscience are frequent. Timothy is exhorted to 'hold faith and a good conscience' (ἀγαθὴν συνείδησιν—1 Tim. i. 19); and, again, to 'hold the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience'

* Westcott, *Hebrews*, p. 116.

(ἐν καθαρᾷ συνειδήσει — 1 Tim. iii. 10). Apostates from the faith have a callous conscience, branded as it were with false principles (κεκαυστηριασμένων τὴν ἰδίαν συνείδησιν — 1 Tim. iv. 1). The ideal to be aimed at is faith and love proceeding from a pure heart and a good conscience (ἐκ καθαρᾶς καρδίας καὶ συνειδήσεως ἀγαθῆς— 1 Tim. i. 5), when the beauty (the attractiveness) of moral excellence is insisted on. A pure conscience is the condition of worship; 'I serve GOD in a pure conscience' (Θεῷ λατρεύω ἐν καθαρᾷ συνειδήσει —2 Tim. i. 3).

To Titus, S. Paul says that the Cretans, as liars and gluttons, have their mind and conscience defiled (μεμίανται αὐτῶν καὶ ὁ νοῦς καὶ ἡ συνείδησις—Tit. i. 15). S. Peter affirms that GOD accepts sufferings undeserved, but willingly endured for conscience' sake (διὰ συνείδησιν Θεοῦ—1 Pet. ii. 19). If a believer has a good conscience, those who revile his manner of life may be put to shame (1 Pet. iii. 16). The cleansing of the conscience in Baptism is insisted on, and the distinction brought out between a merely ceremonial and a spiritual Bath; hence the importance of the 'interrogation' of a good conscience, which probably corresponds to the question and answer of the Baptismal Service: 'Dost thou believe . . . Wilt thou be baptized in this faith?' etc. (1 Pet. iii. 21). The increasing strength

and at the same time the increasing sensitiveness of the Christian conscience is apparent in the use of the word in the New Testament, and we are prepared to find that it will exercise an important function in the growth of the Church, through which the individual believer is called to exercise his vocation.

CHAPTER XIII

CONSCIENCE, THE CHURCH, AND 'PUBLIC OPINION'

WRITERS on Ethics for the most part recognise the influence of Religion in raising the individual standard of duty and impressing the theory and practice of social obligation. That the Christian religion has had some share, through its appeal to the conscience, in the 'deepening and softening of character' in the Western world, few would dispute, unless prejudiced by notions of 'priestcraft' and 'clericalism.' In Herbert Spencer, Professor Haeckel, Sir Leslie Stephen, and Mr. Robert Blatchford,* the Christian religion—especially as organised under the regimen of Bishops, Priests, and Deacons—awakens the liveliest feelings of contempt and hostility; the tree is corrupt and its fruit is corrupt. But thinkers of all schools to-day would agree with Professor Sidgwick in holding that 'the Churches supply extra-mundane motives stimulating men to the performance of Duty,'† and

* See note at end of chapter.

† H. Sidgwick, *Practical Ethics*, p. 12.

that 'the great moralising agencies are the Christian Churches.'*

It would be outside the scope of this essay to discuss at any length the popular use of the word 'Churches,' which may be a convenient, but is practically a confusing and misleading, word to apply to all organised bodies of Christian people. The great Protestant denominations which since the Reformation have sprung up in England and America have shown great vitality, and have quickened the conscience of multitudes by deepening the sense of sin and emphasising the need of conversion of the will, by the appeal to Scripture. They have played a noble part in arousing public opinion on many social questions. Whether these facts justify them in claiming the unscriptural title of 'Churches' is a question which in my opinion must be answered in the negative. For the purpose of clearness, the widest definition of the word 'Church' would appear to be: 'The Church is a Divine self-organising Society, of which JESUS CHRIST is the Head, knit together by a common Faith and Sacraments, whose aim is the spiritual education of mankind in the spirit and faith of CHRIST.'† This definition would include the three great historical branches of the Church—viz., the Greek Orthodox, the

* H. Sidgwick, *Practical Ethics*, p. 114.
† Canon J. M. Wilson.

Roman, and the Anglican—which have held continuously to the 'common faith and sacraments' by adherence to the historic creeds and Episcopal orders as the guarantee of valid sacraments. It would conduce to clearness of thought (which is the ally and not the foe of mutual respect and understanding) if the word 'Churches' were dropped as applied to more loosely organised bodies of Christians.

To speak of the English Church, the Japanese Church, the Canadian Church, etc., is intelligible, if the basis of Faith and Order is the same. To speak of the Wesleyan Church, the Baptist Church, the Theistic Church, etc., is to hide diversity of meaning under a term torn from its natural significance.

Restricting the use of the word, therefore, to its natural meaning—without in any degree disparaging the social and ethical work of the so-called 'Free Churches'—we have to consider the function of the Church in its relation to conscience.

We talk vaguely of 'the Christian conscience,' 'the public conscience,' 'the social conscience,' by which is meant, at bottom, nothing more than public opinion—*i.e.*, the average level of individual and social morality which is current at any one time among the majority of a nation. That public opinion is a great and on the whole a beneficent force will not be disputed. It is felt by very many who hold no dogmatic

creed, and who are not in membership with any organised Christian fellowship. That this 'public opinion' progresses may be taken for granted. Our forefathers tolerated slavery and the employment of women and children in mines. They enjoyed brutal sports, such as bear and bull baiting* and cock-fighting. 'Public opinion,' we say, has abolished these things, as it has modified the savage penal code of the eighteenth century under which women were hanged for stealing (under pressure of starvation) a loaf of bread.† But public opinion is liable to violent reactions; it ebbs and flows. It has, *quâ* opinion, no fixed ideal. At one time it may be predominantly imperialistic, at another democratic; one generation may make competition a fetish, another syndicalism. It is guided by sentiment rather than judgment, and the social reformer who trusts to it is apt to find his vessel stranded—just when he hoped to reach harbour—by the ebb-tide.

The social conscience, therefore—if it really exist—must be something less fluid than public opinion. Is there in fact a social conscience? We may agree with Martensen that there is, in the sense that the common consciousness of what constitutes obligation is a *social force* which

* There was a 'bull-ring' at Wakefield. The name still survives.

† For a graphic picture of the times, see Fitzgerald Molloy, *Sir Joshua and his Circle.*

reacts on the individual consciences of the members of the society. If society be an organism, then undoubtedly the whole is not only equal to, but greater than, its parts—just as a chain is more (and other) than the sum of its separate links; or a sentence more (and other) than a juxtaposition of independent vocables. 'That there is not merely an individual but also a social conscience rests on this, that human individuals are not personal atoms, which have only their own individual duties, but that they are organically combined into a social whole; where in regard to social duties they are solidarically bound (one for all and all for one), and thus have a common responsibility, and with each other fall under the same doom. Just as there are destinies which may visit a whole people, and are felt by the whole people as a common destiny, differing from the individual destiny of each : so there is also a common obligation, responsibility, and guilt, though this does not fall equally on all, but on each according to his special calling and position in society, whilst yet all are responsible in common. As the conscience is the sentinel of individual personality, so it is, too, with regard to society as common personality. The *social conscience* must not be confounded with *public opinion*, which may often be without conscience, and in many cases may show that a people's conscience

sleeps. But where the social conscience is vigorous and lively, it will also bear witness to itself through public opinion. It often bears the relation to public opinion of a *deep undercurrent flowing in an opposite direction;* a secret consciousness that that which is defiantly maintained as public opinion, and set forth as such by its organs, is false and mendacious; a calm witness that these organs are false prophets, whose ideals are only idols, and that the pathway which society is treading is not that of truth, and does not lead to peace. . . . The fact that a whole people may prescribe for themselves fast-days, on which they as a people acknowledge their sin and guilt, and humble themselves before GOD, or the fact that the public voice may express itself powerfully against scandals introduced into society, are significant evidences of the reality of the social conscience.'*

The social conscience therefore does not practically differ from *enlightened* public opinion; it is the consciousness of duty felt by those members of the community who are morally in advance of the rest, and whose practice acts as a stimulus or check upon the prevailing sentiments.

As civilisation advances, public opinion (enlightened by conscience) progressively condemns practices which at an earlier stage excited little or no disapprobation.

* Martensen, *Christian Ethics*, p. 367.

When this public opinion has become a preponderating force, the Law—criminal and civil—*fixes* it. Thus unnatural crimes, when at last they were condemned by the majority, became a criminal offence. Thus the ownership of slaves became illegal. Thus the use of explosive bullets in war was repudiated by civilised nations. But it is very evident that Law cannot legislate in advance of public opinion. It may formally place legislation on the statute book, but if the *communis sensus* of the nation does not back it up the Law is practically inoperative. How, then, does civilisation advance?

There must be a society within the nation—a society possessing a higher standard, to lead average opinion and to raise it to a higher level. The Church is a society of persons within the nation holding a standard of faith and practice which is meant to leaven the mass of public opinion. Comparatively small bodies of enthusiastic persons who really have some cause at heart have always exercised an influence on public opinion (which is apt to be lethargic) out of all proportion to their numbers. And Our LORD gave an instruction to His Church which expresses its social function: 'A city which is set on a hill cannot be hid. Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which

is in heaven.' This function of the Church is inadequately realised by her members, and is quite misunderstood by society as a whole. When, for example, the Church —or, rather, her more zealous members— insists on definite Christian teaching in her schools (*i.e.*, on the dogmatic basis of the Faith), or sets her face against increased facilities for divorce, a popular cry is raised against dogma, against priestcraft, against clerical arrogance, against medievalism and obscurantism. The notion at the back of this outcry is that the Church ought to follow, not to lead, public opinion. This notion—which is the negation of CHRIST'S instruction to His Church—is fostered by those Nonconformist bodies, which, being financially dependent on popular support, can only (for the most part) lead public opinion in the direction in which it wants to go. This is more obviously the case in America than even in England.

The world may, of course, refuse to follow the Church's lead, and may ignore or finally repudiate the Christian faith; the duty of the Church—whether men will hear or whether they will reject it—is to bear witness to the Truth. Better that the Church should go down with her flag flying than that she should surrender to the forces of the world. To quote from one of the most robust and vigorous thinkers of our time: 'Let us not be too careful

to answer our enemies in this matter. It may be our mission to win them from their idolatry by our faithful refusal to worship with them, by our protest for a higher worship and a purer faith. It may be our destiny, as we pass through the fire unscathed, to bring the world to own that there is no God but our GOD. Or if not, if we still be faithful to our charge, if still in sternest faithfulness we utter only what our Master has given us to speak, let us remember that the Church has not always failed in her mission when she has failed to attract and to conciliate; that there is another and yet more awful mission that she is accomplishing in the world, when she testifies and condemns; that if the disciples fulfilled their mission when they dwelt as welcome guests in the home where their sojourn brought the presence of the Son of Peace, they not the less fulfilled it when they shook the dust from their feet as they departed from the house or the city which rejected them.'*

The question of marriage and divorce brings into clear relief the function and duty of the Church in regard to public opinion. There are multitudes who give a general assent to the doctrines of the Church, as long as these do not come into conflict with their own ideas of reform. When they find these doctrines opposed to their views, they repudiate them. They appeal from

* W. C. Magee, *The Gospel and the Age*, p. 188.

the Church to the State. They argue that what is permitted by State law should be permitted by Church law. They are eager to force the Church into subjection to the State; in effect they maintain that the Church has no jurisdiction, and even no existence of her own, apart from her legal 'establishment.' This is a claim which the Church—according to the definition given above—can never admit; the admission would be suicidal. Those who stand outside the Church or repudiate their membership are, of course, not bound by the Church's law; for the Church is by definition a 'self-organising,' and therefore voluntary, society. It has not, nor does it desire, coercive power. Its authority is authority over *its own members*. But the first duty of those whose membership is not merely conventional is loyalty to the standard of belief and practice. It is only thus—by the voluntary and loyal submission and adhesion to the Church's authority—that the members can collectively exercise their influence upon public opinion, and raise the average level of the community.

This principle, which seems to be obvious as soon as stated, is of urgent importance. It is practically unrecognised by very many in the Anglican Communion, and the boast of 'comprehensiveness' is but a poor substitute for such a principle. The formation of a Church conscience—a general recog-

nition of what the Church enjoins and forbids, what amount of orthodoxy in belief and conduct is obligatory as a condition of continued membership—is important not only for the sake of the Church, but in the interests of society as a whole. The witness of the Church is lost when multitudes of her 'adherents' live in ignorance or defiance of her rules, and yet think themselves members, and are so regarded by the nation at large. A common idea of what the Church of England is and stands for might without exaggeration be expressed in the following formula: 'The Church stands for that body of religious (or irreligious) beliefs and practices of which the majority of the ratepayers from time to time approve.'

If, on the other hand, the Church is a Divine society, her members will feel an obligation to be loyal to her discipline; they will feel that she speaks (in her Master's name) as one having authority. The conscience of her members will respond with approval or shame when they keep, or neglect to keep, her standards. And the code and sentiment thence resulting—the Church conscience—would tend to raise national character to a more definitely Christian level.

It is not meant that the 'Church conscience' should relieve the individual from personal responsibility, as if the Church could, or should, promulgate a complete

code of rules, in conformity to whose findings conscience might rest self-satisfied. This is the pitfall of Ultramontanism. The 'Church conscience' is rather to be conceived as a fortress to which the individual may return for shelter and strength when the attacks of temptation threaten to overwhelm him. At such times it is well to feel that we are not dependent on the 'inner light' of conscience alone, but that we can throw ourselves on a social force mightier than our own, and 'behold with astonishment and enthusiasm a Divine company and a Divine Captain.'*

NOTE.—See Herbert Spencer, *Data of Ethics*, p. 222. Haeckel, in *The Riddle of the Universe*, argues that Christianity (in theory) exaggerates altruism at the expense of self-love; honours the man who 'fills up his useless life with mechanical prayers and senseless fasts'; 'has no place for the love of animals'; despises woman and the family (Chapter XIX., on 'Monistic Ethics').

Sir Leslie Stephen, *English Thought in the Eighteenth Century*, vol. ii., p. 83: 'Men, having taken up many principles on trust, and having entirely forgotten whence they came, assume them to be divinely-implanted axioms.'

R. Blatchford, *God and my Neighbour*, p. 162: 'History and ancient literature prove that Christianity did not bring in a new moral code, did not inaugurate peace, nor purity, nor universal brotherhood, did not originate the ideal human character; but checked civilisation, resisted all enlightenment, and deluged the earth with innocent blood in the endeavour to compel mankind to drink old moral wine out of new theological bottles.'

* G. K. Chesterton, *Orthodoxy*, p. 137.

CHAPTER XIV

CONSCIENCE IN RELATION TO SIN AND GRACE

It was maintained in the last chapter that the Church—as a body of believers—exists to set forth a system of faith and morals, belief and practice, which should raise public opinion to a more definitely Christian level. This it must do by its appeal to the conscience, an appeal based on certain basal assumptions as to what constitutes Divine and human personality.

The two most characteristic doctrines of the historic Church are the doctrines of Sin and of Grace. They are fundamental to Catholic theology, and have been the main factors in the arousing and strengthening of the Christian conscience. This is a big thesis, but its main points may be briefly indicated:

I. The total depravity of the human race has never—in the Catholic Church—been exalted into a dogma. It is one of the foundations of Calvin's *Institutes*, and the sects who draw their inspiration from him are still logically bound* by it, though

* The Trust Deed of the Ramsden Congregational Chapel, Huddersfield, set forth as its third article 'The universal and total depravity of man.'

practically they do not look to 'the hole of the pit whence they were digged,' but endeavour to pass to firmer ground by means of the frail pontoons of a new theology. But though the Church has never taught a gospel of despair, she is equally far removed from the smooth preaching of a shallow optimism. The great divines have all based their teaching on the fact of Sin and the need of Atonement.

We are told to-day that 'the modern man is not troubling about his sins'; that 'sin is a shadow where light should be,' that it is even 'a blundering quest for GOD';* finally, that there is no such thing, that 'man cannot sin against GOD.'† If this were so, there would not be the widespread sense of failure, of missing a mark, of falling short of an ideal, of transgressing an inward law, which we describe as an uneasy or guilty conscience. We should be at peace with ourselves, and should want no change and no forgiveness. Whereas sin is the plainest fact in the world; it stares us in the face, and the desire for forgiveness is the first craving of an awakening conscience: 'This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.' If we ask, *e.g.*, what

* R. J. Campbell, *The New Theology*, p. 38.
† R. Blatchford.

caused the loss of the *Titanic*, the answer is, 'The spirit of the age'—the love of luxury and speed, which drove her to her doom. Conscience tells us that we share the responsibility, and therefore the guilt: 'If thou doest not well, sin coucheth at the door.'

What causes our 'industrial unrest'? Conscience says, not economic conditions, but, at bottom, the sin of greed, which finds its occasion in a relentless competition,

> Where each man striving for himself
> Doth thrust his brother in the sea.

If we question teachers or doctors about feeble-minded and deficient children, we soon find that it is the sins of the fathers which bring a crop of evils which baffle legislation; while the most monstrous crimes, especially those committed by men of intelligence and education, are bred in an atmosphere of pagan disregard of the moral law, where conscience has been drugged or stifled.

Even among those who strive to live a blameless moral life, apart from the sanction of religious faith, there is an unhappiness which is a vague consciousness of sin. As Martensen says: 'In the individual life of personality, the unhappiness of emancipation shows itself in many deeper natures as a painful condition of the inner being. If we could look into the souls of our con-

temporaries, we should see, under many a calm exterior, torment and suffering, doubt and secret passion, which do not burst forth into bright flame—modern personality is too reflective for that—but burn with a slow consuming fire. If these agonies could find words, they would express a craving to be delivered from liberty, a desire for an authority to which they might entirely and unconditionally surrender themselves, a love to which they might unconditionally devote themselves.'*

Such a consciousness was expressed by George Romanes when he said: 'When I think, as think at times I must, of the appalling contrast between the faith that once was mine and the conditions of existence as now I find it, I shall ever be unable to avoid the sharpest pang of which my nature is susceptible.'†

This inward discord, which is inseparable from human existence, points to a flaw in our present condition—in a word, to the fact of sin. Conscience is uneasy because it is, overtly or tacitly, aware of this fact. And with this awareness the need of solving the contradiction arises, and the desire to break through the chain of our sins which binds us in. Yet conscience, as it throws light upon our nature, serves only to make the darkness visible. To live the life which

* Martensen, *Christian Ethics.*

† George Romanes, *Thoughts on Religion.*

conscience craves would be to break the link which binds us to our past; and we drag our past with us, as Mezentius was condemned to drag behind him the corpse of his enemy. And the past—if we are to have peace—must not only be severed from the present: it must be blotted out, it must be annihilated; the body of sin must be destroyed. Repentance is inadequate to such a task. Repentance only means that I am sorry for my sin; I confess my sin; I resolve that (GOD helping me) I will not do it again. But these three movements of the soul, contrition, confession, amendment, cannot undo what is done. If an engine-driver neglects to observe the signals, and his train is wrecked, he is no doubt sorry. He acknowledges his fault; he resolves never again to be so careless. But the accident has happened. Nothing he can say or do can restore life to the dead. A churchwarden neglects to renew the fire policy on his church. If a fire occurs, he will unquestionably be sorry, acknowledge his fault, resolve never again to be so careless. But the insurance company will not be liable; a disaster having occurred, he cannot atone for his error. In nature and in human law there is no forgiveness in the sense in which we need it; what is done cannot be undone.

This is the dilemma in which sin places us: we need forgiveness and absolution—

i.e., to be set free from a burden—and it is impossible.

But cannot GOD work this miracle? Again the answer which conscience gives would seem to be a negative. Justice as well as Love must be inherent in the Divine nature; or, rather, righteousness must be an element in perfect Love. Conscience says: 'I cannot worship an unjust God, and by the moral law I am under condemnation. GOD is the upholder of the ethical order of the Universe. How can He uphold the moral law, and yet forgive me who have broken that law? Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?'

II. This question—the very possibility of the forgiveness of sins—is, as Luther said, 'a problem for GOD, and a problem fit for a God' (*nodus Deo vindice dignus*). The doctrine of grace and atonement is the Church's definition of GOD's answer to the problem. The form of the definition may vary from time to time; for our definitions can only be framed by analogy from something of which we have experience, and no human experience can be the equivalent of a Divine act, though it may indicate and partially explain it. We need a theory, or working hypothesis, to enable us to appropriate a fact; but while the Church searches the deep things of GOD, she has not explained the Atonement, but simply confessed her belief in the miracle: 'I believe

in the forgiveness of sins.' In primitive times, when slavery was a prevailing institution, the Atonement was pictured as a ransom (or buying back) of man, the captive, either from (1) GOD or (2) the Devil, the price paid being the blood of CHRIST. Later, when the rights of property became solidified by legislation, the idea of debt became prominent. Sin was a debt which man had incurred, but could not pay; CHRIST discharged the debt, and the prisoner was set free. These illustrations of the truth were subsequently worked out as if they were explanations, until a schism was made between the FATHER and the SON, which shocked the conscience, to which it was meant to appeal. GOD was represented as a vindictive Power, bent on punishing, and willing to accept the sacrifice of the innocent instead of the guilty—a conception which led Olive Schreiner's boy to say: 'I love JESUS CHRIST, but I hate GOD.' GOD was an omnipotent Zeus, wielding the thunderbolt; and CHRIST was a Prometheus, standing forth as man's champion and suffering the Divine wrath. From such blasphemies we are saved, not by working out commercial or forensic lines of thought, but by a deeper conception of Personality, Divine and human. We do not believe in two GODS, but one GOD. The FATHER is the efficient cause of the Atonement, the SON the instrument. It is

all one movement and purpose; 'GOD was in CHRIST, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them.'

The meaning of Divine Grace is that the impossible has happened; that 'there is now no condemnation to them which are in CHRIST JESUS.' Conscience welcomes the deliverance, which it needed, but could not of itself attain. Vicarious punishment may be revolting; but vicarious sacrifice, as Westcott said, is 'the very warp of life,' for the essence of morality is sacrifice, and the sacrifice of CHRIST is its supreme manifestation. That GOD should rule and judge is congruous with all men's ideas of Deity; but that He should, in the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity, lay aside His power and humble Himself, and be made in the likeness of men, and become obedient unto death—this is the amazing mystery of the Atonement. Where the Godhead of our LORD is really believed in, as amongst orthodox Christians, the appeal of the Cross to the conscience is overwhelming. Because I am a sinner I am an exile and a stranger in the outer darkness; but because CHRIST has died, who is my Brother, I am a blood-relation to GOD.

CHAPTER XV

CONSCIENCE AND SACRAMENTS

THE Fathers described Sacraments as 'an extension of the Incarnation.' An immense burden is rolled away when conscience recognises that a Deliverer has appeared who can break the power and abolish the guilt of sin. The sense of freedom is so great that in many minds it seems to be the whole Gospel of Salvation. But a message of salvation, however inspiring, is still a message. Conscience seeks something further—viz., to get into touch with the Atonement itself. Feelings ebb and flow; in days of darkness and doubt they may fail when the need is greatest; and therefore it becomes of vital importance to know whether there are 'means of grace' by which the benefits of the Atonement are applied—from the Divine side—to the individual. The question is not, ultimately, between a spiritual and a mechanical theory of grace, though it is often stated in these terms. It is rather a question between subjective states of consciousness and an objective reality

which consciousness does not create, but apprehends.

The 'Church' theory may be summed up in the phrase that the society is prior to the individual: the whole is greater than its parts, and even than the sum of its parts; it is something in itself, in its own right as an organism.

'We are sometimes asked to think that the Church only exists in the union of believers, and has no reality of its own. Men talk sometimes as if a Church could be constituted simply by Christians coming together and uniting themselves into one body for the purpose: as if Christians came first, and the Church after; as if the origin of the Church was in the wills of the individual Christians who composed it. But, on the contrary, throughout the teaching of the Apostles we see that it is *the Church which comes first*, and the members of it afterwards. Men were not brought to CHRIST, and then determined that they would live in a community. In the New Testament, on the contrary, the Kingdom of Heaven is already in existence, and men are invited into it. The Church takes its origin, not in the will of man, but in the will of the LORD JESUS CHRIST. He sent forth His Apostles; the Apostles received their commission from Him; they were not organs of the congregation, they were ministers of the LORD Himself. Every-

where men are *called* in; they do not come in, and make the Church by coming.'*

This theory of what the Church is rests on solid ground of history and Scripture. For our present purpose it is assumed to be of the essence of Catholic, as opposed to Protestant, theology. It may be perverted or pushed to extravagant antinomies, as, for example, in Ultramontanism, where the authority of the Church is concentrated into a despotism, to the practical abolition even of Episcopacy, and the duty of the laity becomes restricted to passive obedience.† But the point which amongst ourselves needs attention is that Sacraments, as 'an extension of the Incarnation,' convey to us the benefits of the Atonement which CHRIST, 'by the one oblation of Himself, once offered for the sins of the whole world'; and that the Church is the normal channel through which these benefits are applied to the souls of Christian people.

The bearing of this belief on the conscience is immediate and obvious. The application of the Sacrifice of CHRIST, sacramentally ministered by Himself through His Church, will cleanse the conscience and strengthen its powers. 'The Blood of

* See C. Gore, *The Mission of the Church*, p. 153. *Cf.* Curteis, *Bampton Lectures*, 1871.

† See Tyrrell, *Medievalism*, p. 42; and J. N. Figgis, *Churches in the Modern State*, p. 152.

CHRIST, who through the ETERNAL SPIRIT offered Himself without spot to GOD,' cleanses the conscience from dead works to serve the living GOD.*

1. We believe that in the Sacrament of Holy Baptism our children are 'regenerate and grafted into the Body of CHRIST'S Church.' The old nature, which is ours by birth, receives an infusion—by the operation of the HOLY GHOST—of the Grace of our LORD Himself. The personality, or soul, of the child is not overpowered or annihilated, but is 'incorporated into CHRIST.' We believe that where no conscious sin bars the entrance of Divine Grace —and such a consciousness is necessarily absent in the case of infants—the HOLY GHOST operates freely; the gift is bestowed and received. The whole personality is affected by this bestowal. From this it would seem to follow that we should expect the conscience of baptised persons to be more awake and 'alive unto GOD' than that of the unbaptised. Yet we find that thousands of the baptised are practically heathens. So much is this the case that indiscriminate Baptism is lamented as an evil by those who believe that a real gift is bestowed and should not be profaned; while others are driven by the supposed facts of experience to believe that the value of Baptism is chiefly the admission of the new

* Hebrews ix. 14.

member into the fellowship of the Christian Society.

The difficulty would probably disappear if we had a deeper insight into the mystery of personality. Evidently in the infant the personality is dormant: it is rather potential than actual; its elements are as yet undifferentiated. If we could see—as in a crucible—the fermentation of the personality, as it develops, in the baptised child, we should probably recognise a more complex process going on than in the case of a personality untouched by the Sacrament. Yet a hostile and pagan environment may arrest, or even kill, the growth of this new life. The gifts of GOD are not mechanical, but vital. As the child grows, he must learn, in the membership of the Body, to nourish the inward life with its appropriate food—viz., prayer, repentance, and faith. It is under these conditions that we find the conscience of the child in its purest form. The sense of shame is easily aroused; repentance for a fault is bitter, and confession is made without reservation; the consciousness of the presence of GOD seems often immediate and unclouded. The readiness to receive, and the remarkable power to apprehend, Divine truth may also be taken as evidence of the indwelling of the SPIRIT.

2. It should not be forgotten that in the New Testament the gift of the HOLY GHOST,

'through the laying on of the Apostles' hands,' is the completion of the process begun in Baptism. We have therefore no right to expect that in adults who are baptised, but unconfirmed, the work of the HOLY GHOST in the conscience will persist in its previous strength. This would seem to account for the fact that many of the baptised are practically lapsed. If the additional strengthening needed by both sexes at the age of puberty is neglected or despised, there is little wonder if the forces of 'the devil, the world, and the flesh,' entrench themselves in the personality which has opened the gate to these assaults. From this point of view it is a dangerous mistake to postpone Confirmation to an age when the conscience has been weakened by contact with the pagan standards of the world, or habits have been indulged—possibly in ignorance of bodily functions—which defile its purity.

The Parish Priest finds here his heaven-sent opportunity of co-operating with the HOLY SPIRIT in guiding and directing the conscience. When faith is awakened and the practice of penitence is formed, the conscience goes 'from strength to strength,' and the adolescent becomes aware that he has the power needed—through the indwelling of the HOLY GHOST—for a steadfast battle and ultimate triumph in the Holy War. The English dislike of what is

called 'auricular confession,' as tending to relax moral fibre, may make the duty of sounding the depths of the conscience difficult, and a mechanical reliance on Confession may be as fatal as a mechanical reliance on prayer or Holy Scripture; but the neglect of this means of grace is the cause of many unsatisfactory Confirmations and many unworthy Communions; it is the reason why many consciences 'are weak and sickly, and many sleep.'

3. In the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist we rightly dwell upon the reality of the Gift received—'the Body and Blood of CHRIST, which are verily and indeed taken and received by the faithful in the LORD'S Supper.' And we are right in laying stress upon the fact that the means whereby we receive the substance of the Sacrament is Faith; not in the sense that we receive Him because we believe that we receive Him, but because Faith is 'the liberating of the intellectual being of man, his soul and all his thoughts, so as to move in the presence of Divine realities; so as to apprehend the substantial revelation which is awaiting him; so as to be with GOD in the spirit.'* But the effect of the Sacrament in enlightening and strengthening the conscience seems to receive little or no attention at the hands of theologians. If a Divine Personality—

* From an unpublished paper on the Holy Eucharist, by a Cowley Father.

CHRIST Himself, in the fulness of His Divinely-human nature—is poured into our personality, and energises in it through the power of the ETERNAL SPIRIT, then surely we have a right to expect that the conscience will receive an access of vitality, that it will be progressively transubstantiated into the likeness of Him who is its Source. We say that we receive in the Blessed Sacrament 'the whole CHRIST.' But CHRIST is not only Divine Food, but Divine Illumination; 'in Him was Life, and the Life was the Light of men.' It seems permissible to believe that this view of the effect of the Sacrament may bring out the moral implications of the Reality which it embodies. Englishmen as a rule, when they are Communicants, are content to rest in a devout contemplation of the Holy Mysteries and a devout reception of a Gift. But it is not sufficiently recognised that all GOD's gifts are for use. The Christian conscience, illuminated by the Blessed Sacrament, becomes a light shining in a dark place; it becomes 'a candle of the LORD.' By this light social and ethical duties become clear. When we are in doubt about what our duty is in perplexing circumstances, when we are anxious to do what is right, but are unable to decide in the particular circumstances what is right for us, then we are to 'draw near and take this Holy Sacrament to our comfort.' Thus fortified, we may hope to

have an intuition of what CHRIST would do if He were in our circumstances—in answer to our prayer: 'Show Thou me the way that I should walk in, for I lift up my soul unto Thee.' We shall then go forward without doubts and without regrets. Our action will not be paralysed by the suspicion that, after all our consideration, we were self-deceived; that we chose our own way under the misguided impression that it was the path of duty. Whether our action proves ultimately to have been the best possible or no, we shall have the assurance that it was the best possible to us at the stage which our personality had then attained, and every ethical advance made will enable conscience to throw its light still farther into the encircling gloom. The path of the just will be a shining light, shining more and more unto the perfect day.

CHAPTER XVI

CONSCIENCE AND CHRIST

THE Sacramental Communion with CHRIST —the reception and appropriation of the Life which is also the Light of men—must precede in logical order the imitation of CHRIST. It is a vain Gospel which bids us walk 'in His steps,' unless He first gives us the power. 'Son, thy sins are forgiven thee' must precede 'Arise and walk.' As Martensen says, 'Discipleship becomes a communion of incessant reception and appropriation. We must appropriate the Sacrifice of the Cross by Faith before we can think of becoming like CHRIST; imitation is useless without communion.'*

Yet the mystical union of the believer with his LORD does not render him independent of the Scriptural record of the historic CHRIST. Inspiration and Revelation are correlatives. If CHRIST is the True Vine, He is also the Light of the World. The Ascended LORD is one with the Babe of Bethlehem and the Man of Sorrows. A false mysticism is excluded when the fact is realised that 'the Life is manifested, and

* Martensen, *Christian Ethics.*

we have seen it.' The appeal to Scripture —which is fundamental in our conception of the Church—saves us from pressing the doctrine of 'the inner light' into an unreal subjectivity. How does the example of CHRIST aid the Christian conscience in its development?

1. It sets before us an ideal of what a perfect life on this earth would be. Such a life is unattainable for us; for 'in Him dwelt all the fulness of Godhead bodily.' But the Ideal is not an abstract philosophical or ethical notion of what would constitute the perfection of human nature. In CHRIST, as an historic fact (though in Him alone), the Ideal has become actual. The standard therefore (for Christians) is fixed. When men alter their ideals—when at one time their aim is intellectualism, at another quietism and contemplation, or the worship of strength and force—they may dignify their wanderings by the name of 'progress,' but in what direction they are travelling is open to question.

In our days man 'has come into possession of human rights, has liberty of thought and of research, liberty of conscience and belief, political and civil liberty. Thus, on the basis of Emancipation a morality may be developed which is higher than that of ancient times. But what places it in a more precarious position than

that of the ancients is the want of a *fixed and definite ideal* of humanity: not merely the want of a fixed ideal of the kingdom of humanity which is to be striven after, but, moreover, the want of a fixed ideal of personality. Both Greece and Rome have their fixed ideal of personality, which certainly is circumscribed by the limits of nationality, but just from this derives its plastic impress, its individual type. . . . Christianity has its determinate Ideal of personality in CHRIST. . . . Our contemporaries allow unconditional validity to nothing; and were one of these critical individuals called upon to answer the question, "What, then, is his own ideal on which he himself individually relies, and wherein he puts his last dependence?" he would be puzzled how to reply, or could only give an empty and formal answer. For "progress" is only a very misty ideal.'*

The Ideal as exhibited in CHRIST is *negatively* sinlessness, and *positively* holiness. The Christian must aim, relying on Divine Grace, at progressively expelling sin from the regions of thought and action. He must fight an unceasing battle, for 'there is no discharge in that war.' Reverses may be sustained; they must be retrieved. Positions gained may be lost; they must be regained. The whole territory must be subdued and held down with

* Martensen, *Christian Ethics*, p. 238.

a strong hand. And *positively* holiness must be his watchword. Holiness is not a vague word for other-worldliness; it is the essence of the character of the Incarnate Word. 'As He who hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation.' There is no aim higher than this, and the aim is necessary; *it is the condition of salvation.* 'Without holiness no man shall see the LORD.' Holiness expresses the kind of man a Christian ought to be. We are very far from the ideal. There is amongst us much kindliness, and real goodness, and praise of virtue, even where practice limps behind profession. But it will be admitted that holiness is not a characteristic of the average Christian. Yet it is, as it has always been, the condition of 'seeing GOD.' In the great days of the Incarnation, when GOD, in the Person of the Divine SON, revealed Himself to men, Herod saw in CHRIST merely a wonder-worker; 'he hoped to have seen some miracle done by Him.' Pilate saw a fanatic; 'Art thou a king?' The Pharisees saw a revolutionary; 'He stirreth up the people, even from Galilee unto this place.' The crowd saw a failure; 'Not this man, but Barabbas; away with him! crucify him!' Meanwhile the pure in heart saw GOD. The Baptist cried: 'Behold the Lamb of GOD, which taketh away the sins of the world.' Peter testified: 'Thou art

the CHRIST, the SON of the Living GOD.' Mary's spirit rejoiced in 'GOD her SAVIOUR'; while John the Divine felt encompassing him 'the glory as of the only-begotten of the FATHER, full of grace and truth.'

The Beatitudes admittedly fill in the outlines of the Christian ideal. Whether the qualities there brought together can be realised in human life may be disputed. It is not disputed that they were exemplified in CHRIST Himself. It was CHRIST Who was poor in spirit, Who had no place to lay His head; Who, though He was rich, yet for our sakes became poor; CHRIST Who was meek and lowly in heart; CHRIST Who mourned over Jerusalem and at the grave of Lazarus; CHRIST Who hungered and thirsted in the wilderness and on the cross; CHRIST Who was merciful and pure in heart, and persecuted for righteousness' sake. And He has said that 'the disciple must be as His Master.' The ideal has attractiveness even for the unorthodox. John Stuart Mill said that a man could have no better practical aim than 'to live a life which JESUS CHRIST would approve.'* Conscience, when brought face to face with this standard, feels its weakness and powerlessness, and yet cannot resist the appeal; its longing finds voice in the words: 'I will not let Thee go unless Thou bless me.' Holiness, in its outward manifestation,

* J. S. Mill, *Three Essays on Theism*, p. 255.

shows itself as justice, truth, righteousness, purity, kindness, patience, self-control, moral courage; but these are filled, by the spirit of prayer and worship, with a sense of *awe*, as they are brought into the presence of GOD; they are fused together in 'the white light that beats upon the Throne.'

2. It is a great help to the development of conscience, not only to have an Ideal, but to get the Ideal to remain steadily before the mind. The Ideal, as visualised in CHRIST, has this characteristic, that it is impossible to get away from it. CHRIST is, by the confession of friends and foes alike, central to human thought wherever His Name is known. 'What think ye of CHRIST? Whose SON is He?' is a question which everyone who thinks has sooner or later to face. Whether, with Haeckel, men trace the secret of His influence to a human birth, combining the genius of the Greek and the Jewish nationalities,* or, with Matthew Arnold and Ernest Renan, think Him a beautiful but unhistorical creation of our faith, there is no doubt that His character awakens an interest unlike that of any other. Where His Godhead as well as His Manhood is apprehended by faith, the interest is deepened and heightened in a supreme degree. It has, indeed, been argued that a purely human CHRIST would appeal more strongly to humanity; that

* Haeckel, *The Riddle of the Universe*, p. 116.

the example of a brother of the same clay, though of finer mould than ourselves, would encourage us in our moral struggles better than the dogmatic CHRIST of Theology. But this view arises from a mere confusion of thought with sentiment. It was popularised by Matthew Arnold's poetry. His burden is: 'How beautiful would Christianity be if it were true! What a pity that it can no longer be believed! Let us indulge in the luxury of sentiment, even if the mist of tears create an image quite different from what the dry light of reason would reveal.' A later and robuster Agnosticism defiantly accepts the old dilemma, *aut Deus aut homo non bonus;* it no longer recognises in CHRIST a perfect moral character. The fact is that 'those who make CHRIST a mere man,' as Martensen says, 'in order to do honour to the ethical, the human, *weaken and injure the ethical.*' If CHRIST be merely man—though the best and noblest that ever lived—His example does not inspire me with ethical hope, but despair. I cannot help admiring His amazing holiness and self-sacrificing steadfastness, but what am I to think of GOD who could look on at such a spectacle unmoved, and make no sign? What am I to think of human nature if, when 'the white flower of a blameless life' at last appeared on earth, we trampled it savagely under foot? In the most moving

drama which history presents to us, the life and death of the Good Man is a hopeless failure; He is betrayed by man and forsaken of GOD. Any ethic which would influence conduct must have at the heart of it the conviction that somewhere and somehow goodness will be justified; but a theory which brings down CHRIST to our level as man, removes the very ground of our belief in the triumph of goodness.

Again, it is CHRIST'S unlikeness to us, rather than His likeness, which is a secret of His influence. 'We help people,' as Creighton used to say, 'not by being like them, but by being different.' It is the contrast between CHRIST'S moral perfection and my imperfection, between His holiness and my sinfulness, His obedience and my rebelliousness, His forgiving mercy and my enviousness and hardness of heart, His charity and my selfishness, which bites into my conscience and stings its sluggishness. It is this that makes 'the remembrance of our sins grievous unto us, and the burden of them intolerable.' Conscience reacts in presence of the stimulation of this contrast, and we seem to be aware of an inner voice almost audibly saying: 'Awake, thou that sleepest . . . and CHRIST shall give thee light.'

3. The interest awakened by the fact of CHRIST and His example not only sharpens the contrast between what we are and what

we ought to be: it leads to action any man who does not 'cheat himself with words.' 'Interest,' says Professor Dewey, 'is the central factor in the development of any concrete intention. The difficulty in unwise passion is to get the idea of the wise action to stay before our mind at all. Behind every purpose lies some passion, instinct, habit, which gives it impelling force. What a man is interested in occurs to him. Active tendencies, personal attitudes, are thus in the end the determining causes of our having certain intentions in mind, as well as the causes of their active and moving influence. Motives make intentions.'* And again: 'With those carried away by excitement, the *disease* and *incapacity* to take the proffered remedy are the same thing; *only some other passion* will accomplish the desired control.'† The faith of a Christian is at once 'a vision and an allegiance';‡ it is 'personal adhesion, enthusiastic adhesion.'§ It is a matter of common experience—it is the most obvious fact of 'conversion'—that the expulsive power of a new affection for CHRIST will neutralise the desires and habits of years. An army chaplain describes one of his friends in South Africa as 'a fine strong-built fellow of twenty-eight years of age, who had served

* Dewey and Tufts, *Ethics*, pp. 253, 254.
† *Ibid.*, p. 410. ‡ Professor Hort's definition.
§ Sanday and Headlam's definition.

his time with the colours, and been for two years on the reserve. He told me the story of his conversion; how one night the LORD had spoken to him on his way back to barracks, and told him to turn. He went up to his barrack-room, and, after a struggle, knelt down by his cot, to the immense surprise of his comrades, and then and there gave himself to the LORD. He arose a changed man, with a new heart. I asked him, "Did you find it hard to give up the drink?" and he answered, "Oh no, sir; I laid my pot before the LORD, and said, "LORD, if You don't want me to drink, take away the desire for it: which the LORD did at once." I had abundant opportunity of verifying his story by the witness of officers and men, and of observing his life of entire consecration. His faith was shown by his works. . . . After careful preparation he was confirmed by the Archbishop of Cape Town, and became a regular communicant.'*

The 'new affection'—like the affection of human love—finds satisfaction in acting in such a way as the loved Object would approve. Professor Dewey says: 'The moral sense of the good man furnishes the standard of right and wrong; when in doubt, people imagine how such an one would act in a similar situation, or what that other person would think of them if he knew of their

* Paul Bull, *God and our Soldiers*, p. 53.

doing such and such an act.'* When conscience recognises CHRIST as the perfect Example, the Good Man without qualification, the question immediately arises, What would He do in such and such circumstances? and the Ideal braces the will to action, though it is only by union with His Life that the power—as distinct from the desire—for imitation is felt.

4. The steadying and bracing of the will plays an important part in the development of the conscience. 'An act,' says William James,† 'has no ethical quality whatever unless it be *chosen* out of several, all equally possible. To sustain the arguments for the good course and keep them ever before us, to stifle our longing for more flowery ways, to keep the foot unflinchingly on the arduous path—these are characteristic ethical energies. The problem with the man is less what act he shall now resolve to do than what being he shall now choose to become. . . . Effort of attention is thus the essential phenomenon of the will. Every reader must know that this is so, for every reader must have felt some fiery passion's grasp. What constitutes the difficulty, for a man labouring under an unwise passion, of acting as if the passion were wise? The difficulty is mental; it is that of getting the idea of the wise action to stay before our mind at

* Dewey and Tufts, *Ethics*, p. 325.

† W. James, *Psychology*, pp. 172, 451, 452.

all. When any strong emotional state whatever is upon us, the tendency is for no images but such as are congruous with it to come up. If others by chance offer themselves, they are instantly smothered and crowded out. Reasonable ideas—*if once they can get a quiet hearing*—will overcome passion, and passion's cue, accordingly, is always and everywhere to prevent their still, small voice from being heard. The strong-willed man, however, is the man who hears the still, small voice unflinchingly, and who consents to its presence, affirms it, and holds it fast, in spite of the host of exciting mental images which rise in revolt against it and would expel it from his mind. . . . Though the spontaneous drift of thought is all the other way, the attention must be kept strained on that one object until at last it *grows*, so as to maintain itself before the mind with ease. This strain of the attention is the fundamental act of the will. Consent to the idea's undivided presence, this is effort's sole achievement. . . . Everywhere, then, the function of the effort is the same: to keep affirming and adopting a thought which, if left to itself, would slip away.'

The thought of CHRIST, the doctrine of CHRIST, the fact of CHRIST—these are central to the Christian consciousness. 'The attention must be kept strained on that one object until it grows, so as to maintain

itself before the mind.' The object once apprehended by faith—which is a venture of the soul—the will 'affirms it and holds it fast, in spite of the host of exciting mental images which rise in revolt against it.' The centre of life is shifted, for the new centre is CHRIST. If any man is in CHRIST, he is a new creature; old things are passed away; all things are become new.' 'How shall we who are dead to sin live any longer therein?' 'Ye are dead, and your life is hid with CHRIST in GOD.'

CHAPTER XVII

CONSCIENCE AND THE HOLY SPIRIT

THE conviction has been expressed that incorporation into CHRIST normally precedes the imitation of CHRIST; He is Life before He is Light. In other words, Grace precedes Faith, considered as an active energy. On the one hand, the power of the will is *real*. 'For our inmost consciousness and moral experience tell us that in the strife between the spirit and the flesh, between duty and inclination, the will may strive to make the motive of duty, to which it finds itself in conscience bound, dominant and prevailing; it can avoid temptation and resist evil; can, in order to maintain its consciousness of duty, *gather up all its force;* can summon to its aid encouraging considerations so as to bind itself more firmly to the Good.'* On the other hand, the power of the will is *limited*. We approve the better and follow the worse. Though sometimes moral evil arises in us from lack of knowledge, its source is more often feebleness of will. As the cardiac nerve, which keeps the heart going, has to

* Martensen, *Christian Ethics*, p. 118.

draw nourishment continually from the blood, so the will, which is the nerve of action, has to draw on its supplies of power.

Normally the will-power is reinforced—in the Christian—by his personality receiving supplies of power from CHRIST through Divinely-appointed channels. Apart from Him the will is weakened or even paralysed. This truth is expressed in the Tenth of our Articles of Religion: 'We have no power to do good works . . . acceptable to GOD, without the grace of GOD by CHRIST preventing us, that we may have a good will, and working with us, when we have that good will.'

To many people this theory of grace seems consistent and tenable only until it is confronted with the facts of life. Then the theory appears too narrow and too mechanical. It is attacked, or more often is silently abandoned. 'Do you really mean,' says the 'impartial spectator' within us, 'that apart from CHRIST—and CHRIST imparted sacramentally—I have no power to will the good, and even at times to achieve it? Is there nothing ethically praiseworthy apart from dogmatic Christianity? Are there not good men "East of Suez" who put your clergy and laity to shame? Do not many of our secularist friends show a moral and social passion for righteousness which is less conspicuous in your Representative Church Council? Is Church-

warden Smith, who, before his official duties, receives his Communion once a week, with no obvious signs of self-improvement, a morally better man than Captain Brown of the Salvation Army, who gets along without Sacraments altogether? Is the Church tradesman more conscientious than his Nonconformist rival? Can you deny that it is often the possession of a conscience—not the lack of it—which keeps men from coming to church to profess principles which are negatived in practice by Agnostics and Churchmen alike? Your theory would imply that this inward grace would be evidenced by visible fruits, and that these fruits would appear where grace had been received, and not elsewhere. Whereas these fruits—such as they are—seem equally distributed among men of all creeds and of none.'

Such objections lose their force when the whole Christian theory of the relation of GOD to the world is understood. No human being can be conceived as essentially apart from GOD; human personality is derived from the Divine Personality: 'without Him we can do nothing'; 'in Him we live and move and have our being: we [mankind] are His offspring.' The HOLY SPIRIT is 'the LORD, the Life-giver.' 'GOD is not tied to His sacraments: while on the one hand we have no right to expect His grace if we neglect the ap-

pointed means for its bestowal, on the other hand we have no right to limit His power to bestow, where He sees moral worthiness in this life or beyond it.'* Even such a statement, though it opens a wide door, understates the case for the Christian theory. Not only have we 'no right to limit GOD'S power' to bestow grace outside what we consider the normal channels: we should rejoice to recognise the influence of the HOLY SPIRIT wherever goodness manifests itself in GOD'S creation. The good purpose of GOD, and the love of the Holy Trinity, is antecedent to all special dispensations of Grace. We confess that 'the FATHER is eternal, the SON eternal, and the HOLY GHOST eternal; and yet They are not three eternals, but one eternal.' All life at its inception—in spite of the distortions introduced by sin, in spite of the unsolved problem of evil—is the result of the activity of GOD the HOLY GHOST; and the eternal generation of the SON means that He, before His Incarnation, was from everlasting in the bosom of the FATHER as the Eternal Word 'by Whom all things were made.' Therefore the human conscience is not without grace in what we call its 'natural' state—*i.e.*, without the revelation of GOD in Church and Bible. The light which is brought to a focus in CHRIST exists and has existed

* C. Gore, *Bampton Lectures*, 1891.

as a diffused radiance wherever men have followed what they supposed to be 'the light of nature.' A man may think himself to be independent of GOD; he may fancy that by denying the *idea* of GOD he thereby dissociates himself from the *fact* of GOD. But the Christian Church holds that it is not so. CHRIST—recognised or unrecognised—'is the true light that lighteneth every man that cometh into the world: He was in the world, and the world was made by Him,' although 'the world knew Him not.'

To those who say that we have too narrow an idea of grace, we may reply: 'You have too narrow an idea of GOD. If the great word GOD stands for anything in your consciousness; if it is not merely a philosophic abstraction, a "first cause" which your intellect compels you to assume; if it is not merely "a tendency, not ourselves, making for righteousness"—then it is a power and a purpose which works through the whole of creation, and where creation rises into personal existence, as in man, finds a vehicle for its expression in the moral and spiritual nature. We do not belittle the great world-religions. We may thank GOD for the holy life of Gautama, for the moral code of Mencius in China, for the solemn insistence on the supremacy of GOD in Islam; while we recognise that

They are but broken lights of Thee,
And Thou, O LORD, art more than they.

The operations of the HOLY SPIRIT, we believe, are world-wide, and even as wide as the universe; and the development of the human spirit and character in history is His work. Man may resist the SPIRIT—at the cost of degeneration. He may co-operate with the SPIRIT by simply being loyal to the ideas of truth and righteousness, even though unconscious of the source of such ideas. And it is because we believe unreservedly in the HOLY GHOST that 'we believe the Holy Catholic Church.' Man is not an animal who receives a soul at his Baptism. It is because man is GOD'S child by creation that he is capable of receiving GOD'S further gift of regeneration.

This is not to deny, but to assert and to justify, the reality of sacramental grace. Man is essentially spirit, though, as we know him, a spirit expressing itself through the limitations of a bodily existence; and sacraments are spiritual realities, which are meaningless apart from personality. I cannot baptise my dog.

But though we believe that the HOLY SPIRIT has His witness in the human conscience, and only ceases to guide men when the revolt which we call sin makes them 'love darkness rather than light,' and turn their backs on the best they know, yet we hold that some men and nations

are more sensitive to the Divine influence than others. There is something analogous to what we call 'natural selection' in the Providential ordering of the world. On the Christian theory of history, GOD selects particular nations or individuals to be torch-bearers along the path of human 'progress'—progress meaning an approximation towards that

> far-off Divine event
> To which the whole creation moves.

If this be the clue to the history of mankind on its spiritual side, the theory of a nucleus within the organism of humanity, attracting to itself the needful elements, would express the normal method of the Divine working, and would make intelligible GOD'S preferential dealing in 'Election.' To us the Old Testament is the outstanding example of the Divine Selection.

'As we survey the historical books of the Old Testament, we trace first the life of an individual, Abraham; then the life of a family; next we watch the growth of a tribe; and finally a nation. We are watching, as in a crucible, the Divine Hand at work preparing the world for CHRIST. And it is instructive to observe the method employed. It is a process of what may be called Divine Selection. Take an illustration from man's method of selection.

A farmer wants a perfect animal, say horse or sheep. It is well known that by artificial selection, by judicious breeding and crossing, he can educe the very type which he desires. Darwin says an Australian farmer sketches, as it were, the model sheep which he desires, and then works up to it. Following the line of natural selection, he chooses some of the specimens which exhibit some of the qualities he wants, carefully eliminates everything which interferes with his plan, and thus secures the survival of the fittest for his purpose. Thus gradually the perfect type is evolved. Or a gardener wants a perfect rose. He pursues the same plan. He selects, eliminates, crosses those specimens which vary in the required direction, and provides them with a suitable environment, and the result is the perfect rose.

'Following this analogy, we may say that GOD (humanly speaking) was preparing to evolve the Perfect Man, who was not yet embodied. And the method employed was a Divine process of selection. We see GOD in history rejecting and selecting—gradually evolving the perfect type.'*

When the Incarnation took place—when the 'perfect GOD and perfect man' appeared, 'of a reasonable soul and human flesh subsisting, equal to the FATHER as touching His Godhead, and inferior to the FATHER as

* See *The Bible in Brief*, p. 44.

touching His manhood'—the same process continued with a wider extension. CHRIST became the nucleus of a wider society, free from the limitations of nationality. A society within the human race, an Ecclesia, was attracted to Him and incorporated into Him, to form the Christian type of human character. This type is now in the making; and it is this fact which gives life to the whole conception of the Church as 'a spirit-bearing Body.' 'Of His fulness have we all received, and grace for grace.' There are many imperfect or lapsed or merely nominal Christians within the Body. There are many outside the Body who receive an outpouring of Divine grace. But the normal work of the HOLY SPIRIT is to leaven the mass of humanity through a Society within society—a Society which 'continues steadfastly in the Apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in the Breaking of the Bread, and in the prayers.' Other theories of the Christian life, however flourishing for a time, have this weakness—that they tend to split up, to become sectional, and to lose sight of first principles.

When CHRIST'S method and CHRIST'S intention are clearly seen, duty to GOD and loyalty to conscience will increasingly lead men to seek Divine grace where it may be certainly found. The message of the Church to the age is, 'Not by might nor

by power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts.' Her teachers have to win the conscience by the appeal of S. Paul: 'We commend you to the grace of God, which is able to build you up.' The clergy must say: 'We cannot, as we look on the unconscious face of a child, stop the growth of evil passions, and give it a bias towards good; but GOD the HOLY SPIRIT can, and GOD the HOLY SPIRIT does. This is the grace of Baptism.

We cannot, as you pass from childhood to youth—as the world pulls at you, as the flesh allures you—just give you the strength you need; but the HOLY SPIRIT can, and does. That is the grace of Confirmation. We cannot, as day by day the path of life stretches out, and the road is rough and you tire and flag, feed you with food convenient for you; but the HOLY SPIRIT can and does. That is the grace of the Holy Eucharist.

That is why I am a Churchman; not because it is a great institution, or even a great brotherhood, but because it is a reservoir of grace.*

We shall appeal to and invigorate the conscience in proportion as we rely upon the HOLY SPIRIT as the one source of spiritual power. As the 'monarchy' of GOD was the keyword of the eighteenth century, and the Incarnation of GOD in

* See *The Church Lads' Religion*, p. 118.

CHRIST the inspiration of the nineteenth, so the 'fellowship of the HOLY GHOST' and His grace through the Church is the master-word of the twentieth. We need to reinvigorate ourselves by regaining the consciousness of the HOLY SPIRIT expressed by Cyril of Jerusalem in his *Catecheses*: 'Let us fix our thoughts on the course of the water of life as Scripture reveals it to us in the manifold operations of the SPIRIT. As the rain that descends from heaven and makes the earth to blossom shows white in the lily, red in the rose, purple in the violet and hyacinth, and clothes itself in forms so different as those of the date-palm and the vine; so the HOLY SPIRIT, though Himself one and indivisible, distributes His grace as He wills. The soul that receives it bears in all cases the fruits of righteousness, yet not the same fruits: one receives the gift of utterance, another prophetic inspiration; one has power to drive away evil spirits, another to interpret the Scriptures; one is strengthened to practise self-control, another to give alms, another to fast and lead an ascetic life; one learns to despise the things of the body, another is prepared for martyrdom. To each, as the Apostle teaches, is given the manifestation of the SPIRIT to the profit of all.

'All pure thoughts, all refusals to look upon forbidden sights or to seek worldly gain, are from the HOLY SPIRIT. It is He

who inspires courage and strength in the time of trial, who is at work in all believers at all times. Here and now in this congregation He is working in every heart according to its needs, and He sees what each of us is thinking and what each believes. This is a great thing to say, but it falls far short of the truth. All Christians in this diocese, throughout Palestine, nay, throughout the Empire and beyond its borders—bishops, priests, deacons, monks, virgins, lay people—all have the same great Protector and Giver of manifold grace. As the same sun enlightens all the world, so the same HOLY SPIRIT enlightens all who have eyes to see.'*

We may sum up our belief in the words of S. Augustine of Hippo: 'A well-instructed catechumen would not be disturbed by the great number of people in whom he failed to find the things he was bidden to observe, but who yet flocked with him to Church and received the Sacraments. He would know that few have part in holiness of life and the gift of love which is shed abroad in our hearts by the HOLY SPIRIT, whereas many have part in the Holy Sacrament, which he who eats and drinks unworthily eats and drinks judgment to himself. When He is given to a man, He kindles in him the fire of love towards GOD and towards

* Cyril, *Catecheses*, xvi., quoted by Swete in *The Holy Spirit in the Ancient Church*, p. 203.

his neighbour. [Pelagianism] would make the grace of CHRIST consist in His example, and not in His life, saying that men are made righteous by imitating Him, not by the supply of the HOLY SPIRIT which leads them to imitate Him—the SPIRIT which He poured abundantly upon His own.'*

* See Swete, *The Holy Spirit in the Ancient Church*, p. 336.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE DEVELOPMENT OF CONSCIENCE

CONSCIENCE develops, under the guidance of the HOLY SPIRIT, *pari passu* with personality. Personality is a growing thing, and the HOLY SPIRIT is 'the Life-giver.' The effects of His presence — however thwarted by human sin—are conspicuous enough to be noted as landmarks in the history of the Christian Church.

1. The first-fruits of His work within the Christian Society was the stern condemnation and the horror felt by the awakened conscience against unnatural crimes. Heathen culture had not only been no check upon these, but had even thrown over them a false glamour, like the phosphorescence of corruption. S. Paul's appeal to the conscience was felt to be the utterance of the SPIRIT, and the result we know. Aristides, the Athenian philosopher, in his defence of Christianity before Hadrian A.D. 140, could venture to say of the Christians: 'These men abstain from all unlawful wedlock and from all impurity.'

2. Infanticide, which was ignored by the Roman law, as it still is in China, was felt

to be impossible to those who believed in the sacredness of human life, which was the result of GOD taking Flesh in the Incarnation.

3. The institution of slavery was shorn of its worst elements when it was recognised that every man was a *person;* an end in himself, and not a means or a chattel: in sacramental communion 'one was the Master,' and all believers, whether bond or free, were 'brethren,' and even 'dearly beloved.' The abolition of slavery, though long postponed, is the historic example of the truth that conscience marches with the deepening of the idea and fact of personality.

4. The growth of tolerance in modern times is usually regarded as a triumph of the Christian conscience. In so far as it is an outcome of the belief that the HOLY SPIRIT is guiding us into truth, and that He works by influence, not by power, we may regard it with satisfaction and with hope. The gentle spirit of Newman was shocked at the anathemas hurled by Athanasius at his opponents, whom he stigmatised as 'dogs' and 'swine,' as is shown in his translation of the Orations against Arianism, where he bowdlerises the more vehement passages. But the increase of tolerance is probably due to many causes, and not entirely to the development of conscience. When the State tolerates diversity of opinions in the community, it

does so because it has found toleration to be 'one of the most valuable empirical maxims of modern politics.' Persecution does not pay: it provokes a recoil; it turns public opinion against the persecutor: therefore it is inexpedient. Yet on grounds of expediency persecution may be justified, as long as it achieves its object; and on grounds of expediency toleration is only justified because conflicting beliefs create a balance of power which makes on the whole for social equilibrium. As Creighton expresses it, 'Persecution was a natural impulse to man—the desire to have his own way at any cost, and to have it thoroughly, by removing those who differed from him. . . . Tolerance came into being as a denial of this right to exercise coercion as against opinions only. . . . Finally tolerance won its way on the practical ground that men were sufficiently agreed on the fundamental questions of right and wrong for the State to have a working basis sufficient for its purposes, without setting opinions in the forefront.'* To the State, then—considered as an abstraction—the position as to religious belief is one of impartial neutrality; the State keeps the ring where the battle of opinion is fought out and kept within needful limits. With the truth or falsehood of the opinions held, the State as such has no concern; as it has no capacity

* Creighton, *Persecution and Tolerance*, p. 120.

to decide. Its attitude might as well be called indifference as toleration. Creighton remarks: 'I do not know that the tolerance which is now praised by the world is very firmly established. It rests at present mainly on an equilibrium of forces which might easily be upset. There is always a temptation to the possessors of power—be they an individual, an institution, or a class—to use it selfishly or harshly. Liberty is a tender plant, and needs jealous watching.'*

The tolerance which springs from Christian principle is an altogether different thing. It is rooted in conscience, and is a fruit of the SPIRIT. It believes in the ultimate triumph of Truth, because the HOLY SPIRIT is 'the Spirit of Truth,' or, rather, because 'the SPIRIT *is* Truth.' To work by persuasion, not by force, is the Divine method; and the Church must follow 'the mind of the SPIRIT,' not the maxims of the world. The tolerant man 'is virtuous, not because he puts his own opinions out of sight, nor because he thinks that other opinions are as good as his own, but because his own opinions are so real to him that he would not have anyone else hold them with less reality.'†

5. The Christian Church, based upon the mystery of the Incarnation, has always upheld the sacredness of human life. Hence

* Creighton, *Persecution and Tolerance*, p. 140.
† *Ibid.*, p. 123.

her unflinching witness against suicide. This was reckoned honourable among the ancients, as it still is among, *e.g.*, the Japanese. The Christian conscience upholds a doctrine of immense social utility, which is felt to be essential to national well-being, and even to national existence. But the feeling of abhorrence against suicide, as not only a weakness, but a sin, can only be maintained at full strength where the conscience is alive to all that is implied in 'the Word made flesh.' Suicide is disloyalty to GOD'S purpose; it is the act of a deserter from the army in time of war. When life is regarded as a balance between pleasures and pains, the suicide who withdraws from a position which has become intolerable cannot be reasonably condemned. The increase in acts of this kind, and the unwillingness of juries to bring in the true verdict, show that conscience becomes less active, and passes less assured judgments, when the principles of Christianity are disbelieved or unheeded. By some who eschew the religious sanctions altogether the suicide is excused, and even commended. If life is just a possession to do what you like with—if it is not a Divine gift for which you are responsible to the Giver—then it may be a fine thing to destroy it under certain circumstances. Hence the formation of 'suicide clubs,' and the reckless resolve to get out of diffi-

culties which have increased in frequency in recent years. The burial at the cross-roads shows what the Christian conscience thought of the suicide, and the refusal of the Christian form of burial in our country shows what the Church thinks of it: 'The office is not to be used for any that have laid violent hands upon themselves.' When the witness of the Church is weakened in deference to public opinion which is merely sentimental, conscience becomes debilitated; for conscience is not sentiment, but a healthy abhorrence of sin.

6. It is not denied that the ideal of family life which is realised in thousands of Christian homes—and by the contagion of Christianity in some which are not explicitly Christian—is the creation of Christianity. The extent of purity in the domestic relations coincides very exactly with the intensity of religious belief. It was one of the social effects of our religion to which the early apologists appealed; it is one of the chief marks of genuine religious life to-day. In the discussions on Divorce with which we are familiar, public opinion and public sentiment are to a large extent opposed to the rule of the Church. It must not be forgotten that the 'prohibited degrees' express the conscience of Church-people at the time the list was drawn up. If the State, in the course of adaptation to changing conditions, repudiates the agree-

ment made with the Church at the Reformation Settlement, its action does not bind nor loose the conscience; the State has the power of the sword, not of the keys. The Churchman has simply to ask himself: 'Is the action I am contemplating in accordance with the mind of CHRIST, as interpretated by that branch of His Church to which I belong?' The *Church* conscience is to be regarded as an external standard of appeal, when personal passion and prejudice are peculiarly apt to confuse the moral judgment. 'The common habit of the political or legal mind inclines it to inquire, not for ideal social relations, but for temporary security against immediate perils. Stringent regulation of marriage, it is urged, tends to increase the probability of promiscuous relations. . . . In the interest, therefore, of good order, the marriage contract should be simplified, and relief from its bonds should be within easy reach. . . . To all such suggestions that the way to sanctify marriage is to make it less binding, the teaching of JESUS is absolutely opposed. The alternative He presents to permanent acceptance of the marriage bond is not that of a contract which may be hastily made and hastily broken; still less is it the probability of living in vice if one is not living in matrimony. The proposition of JESUS is simply this — that the alternative to permanent union in marriage

is permanent purity out of marriage. . . . The Christian law is not primarily designed to make allowance for social failures, but to establish the principles of the kingdom of GOD.'* The conscience, guided by the HOLY SPIRIT, who takes of the things of CHRIST and shows them unto us, may yet find such expression through the Church as to roll back the forces of moral laxity and corruption.

7. Some of those Churchmen who are most strenuous in upholding the dogmatic basis of the Faith, and most eager to maintain the sanctity of marriage, seem willing to admit one kind of divorce to which the Founder of our religion gives no encouragement—viz., the divorce of the spiritual from the secular. If we refuse the bargain offered by Herbert Spencer to Faith, 'Give me the knowable, and keep the unknowable,' we should surely be wise to decline the later offer, 'Give us the secular, and keep the spiritual.' Social and economic questions are at bottom spiritual questions. Spirit and matter—viewed from the central height of the Incarnation—are not contradictory; they are not even territories whose frontiers touch without mingling; spirit upholds and gives form and meaning to matter. The Christian conscience must keep itself unspotted from the

* Peabody, *Jesus Christ and the Social Question*, p. 57.

world; otherwise it cannot cleanse the river of life from its impurities. But inward purity is not the whole of religion: 'pure religion and undefiled before GOD and our FATHER' is also 'to help the fatherless and widows in their affliction.' Now, the affliction of the fatherless and widows in our days is the misery to which they are reduced by economic conditions. Those who are badly housed, badly fed, deprived of fresh air, kept by pitiful wages below the level of human subsistence, tempted to drunkenness and immorality by the grinding squalor of their lot, are a standing proof that the principle of the Incarnation is not yet grasped or understood. The loyal acceptance of this foundation dogma would render such conditions impossible, and the acceptance of such conditions shows that the conscience which was awakened in the last century by Howard, Shaftesbury, and others, has now a greater and more urgent task. The existence of a submerged class to-day is not only a menace to society, but a challenge to the conscience. It is the function of spirit to inform and transform the medium in which it works; and conscience, which is not only a sentiment, but a power, will react (it may be with violence) in a new Crusade for the rescue of the disinherited. 'It is monstrous,' as Bourdaloue said, 'for the Body to sit in luxury under a Head crowned with thorns.'

CHAPTER XIX

CONSCIENCE AND WAR

It is difficult to write with the necessary detachment on the problem of conscience in relation to war at a time when the most stupendous conflict in the history of the world is being waged. When this essay was sketched out, and for the most part written, the peace of the world was undisturbed. Conscience had for its object-matter the problems connected with the claims of Ulster and the Nationalists, and the pleadings for justice on behalf of the Church in Wales. Now these questions are for the time swallowed up in a greater issue—viz., the problem of the future of Europe.

Yet as a building in flames on a calm night lights up the faces of the crowd, so the world-war reveals personality to itself. When 'a day of the LORD' comes, principles are laid bare, and tendencies appear in their true light: 'The foundations of the round world were discovered at Thy chiding, O LORD; at the blasting of the breath of Thy displeasure.'

It is a question merely of academic in-

terest whether the Christian conscience can justify war under any circumstances. CHRIST Himself, Who taught and practised the doctrine of turning one's cheek to the smiter, Who was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and gave His blessing to the peace-makers, Who taught His disciples to 'put up the sword into its sheath, for they who take the sword shall perish with the sword,' did not refuse to exercise judgment as the Son of Man. He claimed the power to preserve His life, even when He did not exercise it: 'Thinkest thou not that I can pray to My FATHER, and He will presently give Me more than twelve legions of Angels?' He twice drove out from the Temple precincts, scourge in hand, those who profaned the holy place. In Gethsemane He caused His would-be captors 'to go backward and fall to the ground.'

In spite of Tolstoy, the Christian conscience has not gone beyond the Apostolic injunction, 'If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.' And the vast majority of Christians in all countries to-day would be willing to subscribe to that part of our Thirty-sixth Article which says: 'It is lawful for Christian men, at the commandment of the magistrate, to bear weapons and serve in the wars.' It is well to allow ourselves to be under no illusions as to 'Christian

nations.' There has never been, and there is not at this time, a Christian nation in existence. France, perhaps, under the rule of the saintly King Louis, approached the ideal most closely. But though there has been a Christian Church for nineteen centuries, it has only been a nucleus in national life. When it has tried to cover externally a whole nation, its principles have been spread so thin that they have been little more than a veneer over native paganism.

The Church (so far as she is true to her principles) works not by force, but by influence. When she takes up carnal weapons a Divine Nemesis pursues her. In the State, as Bishop Westcott did not shrink from saying, the ultimate appeal is to force. When the social machine works smoothly, we are apt to think of Law and Order as principles which enforce themselves. But behind the policeman, the magistrate, and the judge, there stand as the ultimate safeguard of the Constitution the armed forces of the Crown. Such is the fact, and it must be taken into account for what it is worth. But the existence of a thing does not prove that the thing ought to exist, unless we are prepared to accept Pope's dictum, 'Whatever is, is right.' The revolt of conscience against the doctrine of Force, and the abhorrence which it arouses, are also facts which must

be taken into account. The spirit which is in man never accepts defeat as ultimate, even when defeated. It is this war of the spirit against the flesh which gives its whole significance to the cosmic struggle. I do not believe that hatred is GOD'S eternal law, that disorder is His eternal counsel; that the Christian ideal of 'a perfect man in a perfect society' means actually a perfect machine-gun in a perfect shambles. I believe that the Son of Man came, not to destroy men's lives, but to save them. Yet if the Christian principle, and the witness of conscience, *could* not be denied or ignored—if 'enlightened self-interest' were coincident with virtue—Faith would lose its *raison d'être;* it would be, not a venture, but a calculation of chances.

Conscience says that there are causes for which—even if defeat followed—it would be well to fight. The question for conscience is not, 'Can I win?' but, 'Is the cause righteous and just? Is the motive greed or ambition or the expansion of empire; or is it to succour the weak against the strong, and to be true to the pledged and plighted word, and to fulfil solemn and sworn obligations?' If the answer affirms the latter, then no fear of consequences, no shrinking from sacrifices, no calculation of interest, can absolve conscience from the duty of obedience to the moral law.

Once to every man and nation comes the moment
to decide,
In the strife of Truth with Falsehood, for the good
or evil side;
Some great cause, GOD's new Messiah, offering
each the bloom or blight,
Parts the goats upon the left hand, and the sheep
upon the right,
And the choice goes by for ever, 'twixt that darkness
and that light.
Careless seems the great Avenger; history's pages
but record
One death-grapple in the darkness 'twixt old systems
and the Word;
Truth for ever on the scaffold, Wrong for ever on
the throne—
Yet that scaffold sways the future, and behind the
dim unknown
Standeth GOD within the shadow, keeping watch
above His own.

These words, written by James Russell Lowell in 1845, breathe the same spirit which is expressed by a writer of to-day under the title 'Thoughts in Adversity,'* which might be called a plea for the higher faith:

'If we are to have a real faith in the Divine justice, we must not expect it to be our ally on earthly battlefields; we must not hope to see the laws of GOD fighting for us, as the Great Twin-Brethren fought for the Romans at the Battle of Lake Regillus. For the essence of faith is that it does not look for payment here on earth. When Cromwell said, 'Trust in GOD, and keep

* *Times Literary Supplement*, August 27, 1914.

your powder dry,' he meant that GOD would not keep your powder dry for you, and, further, that He would not damp the powder of an unrighteous enemy. Faith is only pure and sound when the faithful are ready to face failure for it; and it only pays, in this world, when they are enduring just because they do not expect it to pay. The Battle of Marathon would not have the glory that it has—a glory that still shines upon us like a victory of our own—if the Greeks had gone into the field sure that they would win because the future of the world was in their hands. They must have believed that all the odds were against them; and there have been many Marathons in history that were defeats no less glorious. Faith and courage only exist because the future is always uncertain; and the faith and courage that are based upon an illusion of certainty are themselves illusions, and turn to panic at the first touch of failure.

'The true GOD does not now reveal Himself in fire from heaven to the confusion of the priests of Baal. "It is the way of Heaven not to speak; yet it knows how to obtain an answer." That is the truth about the universe as we know it; and it is for us now to make the answer of faith to this silence of a Heaven that faith alone tells us is not indifferent. And that answer now is one of deeds, not words, but of deeds

made constant by the faith that is behind them. It is for us not to expect failure or success, not to be cast down or puffed up by the winds of fortune, but to remember always that the cause is greater than the fortunes of those who fight for it. We believe, and with reason, that we must win in the end; but our victory would be worth nothing to the world if we had only fought because of that belief. We must fight as if all the odds were against us, and there were nothing but the cause to make us fight, if we are to keep our souls worthy of the cause to the end.'

Thus the individual conscience — or, rather, the personality expressing itself through conscience—finds in religious Faith its justification and its support. Where a whole nation is for a time raised to this level by the 'sweet uses of adversity,' something worth calling a 'national conscience' may be evoked. The air is electric, and the diffused moral sense of the community may concentrate itself in flame.

On the other hand, the doctrines of Naturalism and Determinism,* which briefly may be expressed in the Creed, 'There is no GOD, no soul, no responsibility,' are proving themselves bankrupt by the very process which is giving them immediate success. A great nation—illustrious in music, learning, and philosophy

* See Chapter III., 'Conscience and Naturalism.'

—is taught for a generation that a people has not, and cannot have, a conscience like an individual; that the dictates of conscience must be suppressed if they conflict with the self-interest of the community. The first duty of a nation is to itself; and a nation can only be patriotic if it has no national conscience; the individual has a duty to his country beyond which there is no duty to mankind. The State is non-moral; and it is the duty of citizens to surrender their individual consciences to their Government.

The contention of this essay—viz., that Ethics cannot be built securely upon anything less than the Religious Sanctions, and that it is for the sake of conscience that Ethics have practical value—is vividly illustrated in an unforeseen way by the speech of the Imperial Chancellor, Von Bethmann Hollweg, in his declaration to the Reichstag on August 4, 1914:

'Gentlemen, we are now in a state of necessity, and necessity knows no law! Our troops have occupied Luxemburg, and perhaps [as a matter of fact, the speaker knew that Belgium had been invaded that morning] are already on Belgian soil. Gentlemen, that is contrary to the dictates of international law. It is true that the French Government has declared at Brussels that France is willing to respect the neutrality of Belgium as long as her oppo-

nent respects it. We knew, however, that France stood ready for the invasion. France could wait, but we could not wait. A French movement upon our flank upon the lower Rhine might have been disastrous. So we were compelled to override the just protest of the Luxemburg and Belgian Governments. The wrong—I speak openly—that we are committing we will endeavour to make good as soon as our military goal has been reached. Anybody who is threatened, as we are threatened, and is fighting for his highest possessions, can have only one thought—how he is to hack his way through (*wie er sich durchhaut*)!'

Determinism—which has been preached, and accepted by thousands and tens of thousands, not only in Germany, but in England,* in recent years—amounts to the assertion that man is not a spiritual personality, but a creature of necessity. Necessity knows no law: the law of international obligation, the law of public morality, the law of conscience, are simply 'words of little meaning, though the words are strong.' A sworn and signed treaty is merely 'a scrap of paper' when the plighted word stands in the way of seizing a 'necessary' advantage.

It is worth noting that from the standpoint of Materialism this is exactly what a treaty is—a scrap of paper. There is

* See H. Sidgwick, *History of Ethics*, p. 265.

nothing else in it which any purely physical and chemical process could discover. If it is more than this, it is precisely because fidelity, honour, obligation, are spiritual realities—because conscience is enthroned in personality. Therefore a scrap of paper may be—like the regimental colours to a soldier—a symbol and sacrament of a nation's honour, for which it may be worth while to die.

This conviction, which in a supreme crisis is not reasoned, but instinctive and passionate, found worthy expression in the speech of the Prime Minister in the Guildhall on September 4, 1914. Mr. Asquith said:

'What account should we—the Government and the people of this country—have been able to render to the tribunal of our national conscience and sense of honour if, in defiance of our plighted and solemn obligations, we had not done our best to prevent—yes, and to avenge—these intolerable wrongs?

'For my part, I say that sooner than be a silent witness, which means in effect a willing accomplice of this tragic triumph of force over law and of brutality over freedom, I would see this country of ours blotted out of the page of history.

'That is only a phase, a lurid and illuminating phase, in the contest into which we have been called by the mandate of

duty and of honour to bear our part. The cynical violation of the neutrality of Belgium was after all but a step, the first step, in a deliberate policy of which, if not the immediate, the ultimate and not far distant aim was to crush the independence and the autonomy of the free States of Europe. First Belgium, then Holland and Switzerland—countries like our own imbued and sustained with the spirit of liberty—we were one after the other to be bent to the yoke, and these ambitions were fed and fostered by a body of new doctrines and new philosophy preached by professors and learned men. The free and full self-development which to these small States, to ourselves, to our great and growing Dominions over the seas, to our kinsmen across the Atlantic, is the well-spring and life-breath of national existence—that free self-development is the one capital offence in the code of those who have made force their supreme divinity, and upon its altars are prepared to sacrifice both the gathered fruits and potential germs of the unfettered human spirit. I use this language advisedly. This is not merely a material, it is also a spiritual conflict. Upon this issue everything that contains the promise and hope that leads to emancipation and fuller liberty for the millions who make up the masses of mankind will be found sooner or later to depend.'

The doctrine of necessity has a further implication which has not yet, perhaps, been fully realised, because in practical affairs few doctrines are pushed to their logical conclusions. Those who theoretically deny the moral law cannot completely divest themselves of what is, after all, an element in human nature. A 'just protest,' even while overriding it, the German Chancellor admits to be *just*. The 'wrong that he is committing' he feels to be *wrong*. But on the necessitarian basis there *is* no right and no wrong. Conscience and the moral law have no objective validity.

For the credit of our common humanity, we may hope that the story of, *e.g.*, the Belgian atrocities has been exaggerated. But the point to remember is that from the point of view of necessity there are not, and cannot be, 'atrocities.' Atrocities assume a moral standard. 'Frightful examples' may be made: but they are frightful merely in the sense that they cause fright and panic—that is, that they weaken resistance and break down, with the shock of the unexpected, the steadiness of the adversary's nerve. Even the slaughter of children has no more moral significance than the destruction of a batch of snake's eggs. It is a wise precaution against future inconvenience.

With the abolition, or at least dethronement, of conscience, the path to material

success would appear easy: the last obstacle would seem to be overcome. And if materialism were all, the conclusion would be warranted. But the weakness of materialism is that it does not, and cannot consistently with itself, take account of spiritual realities; and forces therefore are working against it which it has no effective weapons to withstand. If 'enlightened self-interest' is a nation's creed—and our nation has need of the warning not less than her adversary—it is forced to believe that that motive, and that motive exclusively, will account fully for the actions of other nations. *It will act on that assumption;* and where higher and other motives prevail it will find itself in the presence of Ideals which have again and again proved their supremacy against 'the arm of flesh'; it will be wrecked on the stupidity which is the Nemesis of cleverness.

Mr. H. G. Wells has described the Martians* as possessed of a Ray which when turned upon guns and fortresses caused them to melt and turn to flame. Conscience, ideally, is such a Ray; and such will be its effect when turned upon the fortress of Materialism.

* H. G. Wells, *The War of the Worlds.*

CHAPTER XX

CONSCIENCE AND POLITICS

POLICY is a system of official administration; politics is the art or science of government. According to its subject-matter, it may be concerned with civil or ecclesiastical administration, though the word is more usually applied to the former than to the latter. For our present purpose both branches of the subject may be included. As members of a State and as members of a Church, men have duties which conscience bids them discharge.

1. The individual's duty of loyalty to the State of which he is a member may be taken to be axiomatic. Where the sense of loyalty and solidarity is altogether absent, the State breaks up in revolution; when it is weak, the State drags out a maimed existence. Yet this loyalty has its limits; it is not the equivalent of passive obedience. Where duty to the State is considered the paramount obligation, in the sense that the interest of the State takes precedence of considerations felt as moral, the result is a theory of the State such as that referred to in the last chapter.

Duty to the State, and the good of the State, must never be considered as ultimate; it is part of a larger concept—viz., the duty to mankind and the good of mankind. As Professor Sidgwick says, 'In considering difficulties of detail, we should never lose grasp of the importance of that rectitude of purpose, that mental altitude and habit of devotion to universal good, which constitutes the core and centre of the good life. Whatever else shifts, as life and thought changes, this central element is stable and its moral value indestructible; and it not only consoles us to rest on this certitude when practical doubts and perplexities assail us, but it may sometimes afford a solution of those doubts.'*

Conscience which manifests itself in 'rectitude of purpose,' and takes no lower standard than 'the habit of devotion to universal good,' demands of the State that it should be as good as a good man. 'The deepest distinction in politics,' says Martensen,† 'is that of difference in views of life and of the world; whether one follows the *ethical* or the *fatalistic* view of life. The practical question of greatest importance is this: *in what power do we confide as ruling in history?* To the fatalist the God of conscience is not the Almighty,

* H. Sidgwick, *Practical Ethics*, p. 49.
† Martensen, *Christian Ethics*.

who only rules in private life, but not in history. The ethical statesman holds that the law of morality is also the law of the world, the inmost law of history.'

Kant spoke to the same effect: 'True policy cannot take a single step without having paid homage to morality; and though politics in and for itself is a difficult art, yet its combination with morality is no art at all. For as soon as they come into collision with each other, morality cuts the knot which policy cannot unravel.'

It is to be feared that no State at present refuses 'to move a step without having paid homage to morality.' The homage paid is often perfunctory — a lip-service designed to attain its ends without giving too violent a shock to the moral sense of its citizens. Even in these cases a moral sense is presumed to exist in the nation, which policy must not too cynically disregard. But a new theory has sprung up which has had a sinister light thrown upon it by recent events. Professor Sidgwick wrote in 1897:

'The approval of such breaches [of morality] is formulated in explicit general maxims, and deliberately applied by eminent students of history and political science to the acts of statesmen in remote ages and countries. This seems to be especially the case in Germany,

where men of letters have in recent times taken the lead in advocating the emancipation of the statesman from the restraints of ordinary morality. It is not merely that the German defends his Frederick or Bismarck to the best of his ability; his historical and philosophical soul is not content with that. To do him justice, he is equally earnest in defending the repudiation by Rome of the treaty with the Samnites after the incident of the Caudine Forks—or any similar act of bad faith or aggression perpetrated by that remarkably successful commonwealth. . . . The interest of a particular State is taken as the ultimate and paramount end, justifying the employment of any means whatever to attain it, whatever the consequences of such action may be to the rest of the human race. This "national egoism" has been specially prominent in the political thought of the last forty years, and has found the most unreserved and meditated expression in the writings of Germans. "The State," says Rumelin,* "is self-sufficient. Self-regard is its appointed duty. The maintenance and development of its own power and well-being—egoism, if you like to call this egoism—is the supreme principle of all politics. The State can only have regard to the interest of any other State so far as this can be identified with its own in-

* Chancellor of the University of Tübingen, 1875.

terest. The maintenance of the State justifies every sacrifice, and is superior to every moral rule.'' '*

These principles can not only be used to justify military operations which have been usually ruled out as impossible among civilized nations—*e.g.*, the destruction of Louvain, the use of women and children as a 'shield' for troops in action, and the slaughter of non-combatants: they can be equally well applied to the repudiation of economic obligations. The German view is thus expressed by Professor Usher: 'Not only does England, and to a great extent France, depend for its supplies of food and raw material on distant countries, but it has vast capital invested there without the material means of defending it. Whatever is written on paper is paper, and is not to be made into factories or railways or tangible assets of any kind by any process of jugglery. Things are, and writing on paper does not change the thing or its position. . . .' The moment the borrowers refuse longer to recognise the validity of her claims upon their revenues and incomes, and begin to realise that they hold, with a clutch which she cannot loosen, the actual substance of wealth, they will begin to see that her wealth is not real, but depends purely on their willingness to continue to pay her revenue, which they may

* H. Sidgwick, *Practical Ethics*, pp. 59, 64.

stop paying her at any moment without suffering any consequences. To be sure, such notions as these presume the violation of every notion of commercial morality . . . but, as the Germans say, *if they were violated*, what could England and France possibly do to avert destruction? The moral code of the financial world, like the moral code of the political world, is based upon the notions of England and France, upon ideas obviously themselves the result of a peculiar situation, on whose continuance the welfare of England and France depends. Their moral code is based on their ownership of the world and their desire to continue it in perpetuity, and their moral code therefore condemns Germany to insignificance. The Germans refuse to recognise as moral anything which jeopardises their national existence. They claim the right to protect themselves by any weapons which will secure the desired result, and they have no intention of forgoing the use of these terrible economic weapons, simply from a supine acceptance of so-called ethical notions, whose very presumptions militate against them.'*

Such a doctrine, on the face of it, can only be advanced by obliterating the conscience and suppressing the sense of shame which is felt seriously to handicap the complete egoist. Equally obvious is the

* Ronald G. Usher, *Pan-Germanism.*

fact that the doctrine does not spring naturally from human nature as we have conceived it, but has been invented as a weapon to support a foregone conclusion. What stands in the way of reaching the goal must be annihilated, even though to gain the whole world man must most literally lose his own soul in the process. The Spirit of Evil once more makes his offer: 'All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me.'

When the real issue is thus laid bare, the conscience, in its passionate uprising, becomes aware of its own strength. It is not primarily a material, but a spiritual combat; and here conscience has proved her weapons. The Christian conception of Personality and the Christian tradition of Morality alike are her allies. To lose, if need be, life for the sake of what is dearer than life is to save it.

2. The moral sense of a community—what is sometimes called the national conscience—unless it is forced by some great crisis to fall back upon first principles, is apt to be much more sluggish than the individual conscience. What is spread over a large area is diluted; where responsibility is widely diffused, its pressure is less felt by any individual. Groups of men tend to have a code of their own which they strive to justify within the group; though conscience asserts itself by denying an

equal validity to the code of another group. Lawyers criticise parsons, and parsons lawyers; while both condemn what are called 'sharp practices' in business.

If statecraft is to be moralised, and a real national conscience to be won and maintained, the individual conscience must increasingly demand justice, honour, and veracity, in public life. The man of 'good-will'—as Kant would say—must be the ideal of what the State should be. By steadily pressing this demand, in spite of all temptations to compromise it, the individual conscience will help to make actual its ideal.

But if Conscience is to make this demand on the State, it must show a higher principle of morality than at present prevails in the State. If it censures public policy, it must not be liable to a retort of *tu quoque:* 'Thou that sayest a man should not steal, dost thou steal?' On reflection, it is plain that conscience in average persons is less sensitive in regard to society than to individuals. A man will rob the State who would be honestly indignant if suspected of robbing his neighbour. Instances abound. People who are honourable in their private relations will cheat a railway company, or evade death duties, or give fictitious returns as to income, or give or accept bribes in the way of business, or write testimonials which are

seriously misleading, or use in the pulpit or in the press arguments which they have not verified, or only half believe, under the pretext, 'It is good enough to say.' They will say prayers in public, and will neglect prayer in private; they will 'go to Communion,' and yet be unforgiving and censorious; they will make a parade of Sunday worship, while on Monday their motto will be, 'Let us *prey*.'

Such habits of hypocrisy quench the HOLY SPIRIT in the conscience. The duty of the Church and of each member is to raise the moral life to the level of Christian profession. Then the individual, and the Body collectively, will begin to exercise moral pressure on the State; then policy will no longer be reckoned a mere equivalent for strategy and cunning: it will recover the dignity which in the Greek commonwealth was associated with *τέχνη πολιτική*: it will be the art of right government, worthy of a statesman who is *καλοκἀγαθός*.

3. The *ἐκκλησία*, like the *πόλις*, must have its politics. As statecraft is the art of the statesman, and woodcraft the art of the woodman, so priestcraft is the art of the priest. Yet the fact that priestcraft, like statecraft, has acquired a sinister meaning shows that things good in themselves may be and have been abused: *corruptio optimi pessima*. The Church

must not juggle with truth, or veer with the changing gusts of popular sentiment. The real sign of the Church is not the weather-cock upon the steeple, but the rigid Cross upon the Altar. The weather-vane is a warning that an Apostle once denied his LORD.

The quickened conscience of the individual is to evoke and inspire a 'national conscience'; the duty of the clergy is to inform and to stir the conscience of the individual by expressing the conscience of the Church. If this is the position, the clerical conscience must be adequate to this high task: 'Be ye clean, ye that bear the vessels of the LORD,' is a postulate as well as an axiom.

The controversy in the English Church associated with the name of Kikuyu has raised many issues of varying importance: whether, *e.g.*, episcopacy is of the *esse* of the Church; on what terms—if at all—unorthodox Christians may be received at our altars; whether Confirmation is a *sine quâ non* of Church membership. But though all these questions may have vital importance to Church members, there is a deeper question which to many seems vital to the whole future of Christianity as a world-religion—viz., whether a man may conscientiously remain a member of a Christian society without holding *ex animo* the religious principles or doctrines upon

the basis of which the Christian society was in fact founded.

The Church of England has always allowed a wide liberty of thought to her children, and even to her accredited teachers; she has held that Truth has an intrinsic strength. Nothing less than 'all truth' is the heritage into which 'the Spirit of Truth' is ultimately to lead mankind; and the attainment of truth in any particular case has been historically through the exhaustion of error. Many experiments must be tried before the true solution is found. There is scope, therefore, for independent inquiry to sift and amass material which may be incorporated into the building. On the other hand, dogmas are not to be multiplied to 'safeguard' the main structure of the Faith; flying buttresses may be a weakness, even when raised by pious hands.

But it should be obvious—and is obvious to the lay mind—that liberty of thought among the members of a society is conditioned by the fundamental need of loyalty to the essential principles of the society. The Church, like the State, is a corporation; and no corporation can hold together unless its members have some 'articles of agreement.'

It is ultimately around the citadel of conscience that the battle will have to be decided. An ecclesiastical bull will not settle it, nor a heresy-hunt *minus* the stake

and faggot. The method of the Church must be 'by manifestation of the truth to commend herself to every man's conscience in the sight of GOD.' The words of a kindly and detached spectator* are in this connection worthy of the consideration of Christian people:

'How far it is desirable that an individual should take any part in a social act of religious worship, while conscious of a certain amount of intellectual dissent from the beliefs implied in the utterances of the worship, is a question which may properly be left to be decided by the varying sentiments of individuals. The effect of public worship on the worshipper is so complex and so various that it would be inexpedient to attempt to lay down a definite general rule. The minds of some are so constituted that it would be a mockery to them to take part in a service not framed in exact accordance with their theological convictions; to others, again, quite as genuinely religious, but more influenced by sympathies and associations, the element of intellectual agreement appears less important.

'The case of the teacher, the officiating minister, is different; for on him the imperative duty falls—in the Church of England—of solemnly declaring his personal belief in the fundamental doctrines of the Church as stated in the Apostles' Creed

* H. Sidgwick, *Practical Ethics*, p. 138.

and the Nicene Creed. And here, I think, we come to a point at which the efforts made for more than a generation* in England, to liberalise the teaching of the English Church and to open its ministry to men of modern ideas, must find an inexorable moral barrier in the obligations of veracity and good faith. For the priest who recites any one of the precise and weighty statements in the Apostles' Creed, while not really believing it, can hardly be acquitted of breaking both these rules of duty. . . . I believe that there are men who make these false statements regularly with the best intentions, and with aims and purposes with which we shall all here sympathise; but the more we sympathise with them, the more it becomes our duty to urge —from the purely ethical point of view which we take here—that no gain in enlightenment and intelligence which the Anglican ministry may receive from the presence of such men can compensate for the damage done to moral habits, and the offence given to moral sentiments, by their example.'

While we hold, with Martensen, that 'GOD alone can bind the conscience,' we assert that conscience must bind men in all causes, whether ecclesiastical or civil. No individual can contract himself out of the moral law.

* The date of the Lecture on the Ethics of Religious Conformity was November 24, 1895.

CHAPTER XXI

CONSCIENCE AND TRADE

THAT the State is non-moral, and has no business to concern itself with morals, is the great heresy of modern times. In pre-Christian civilisations such a doctrine would have been a mistake; but a heresy is self-will repudiating the Christian tradition.

This heresy, which, as we saw in Chapter XIX., has been developed into a system, is now upon its trial. The nation where the doctrine has been worked out most thoroughly, and accepted with the utmost docility, is now putting theory to the test of action. Where 'the maintenance of the State is superior to every moral rule' there is no place for a national conscience; and the individual conscience would seem, to judge by recent events, to be effaced when confronted by 'necessity,' which knows no law. But what has been the result? The conscience, which was assumed to be non-existent, or at least capable of being terrorised into acquiescence with the inevitable, is answering to the cry of morality in a manner which rebukes our lack of faith. We are witnessing the awakening of a 'world-con-

science,' which may be the harbinger of a lasting peace. Why are Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, India,* putting all their resources at the service of the Motherland? Ultimately, because love is stronger than hate; because, with all England's faults, they love her still; because she stands in the main for freedom and liberty of conscience; because the world dimly feels that a professedly non-moral State would be an unsupportable tyranny. But when the heresy has been disposed of, we must dispose also of its corollaries. Men who would not maintain—at any rate, in its extreme form—the doctrine of the exemption of the State from the rules of ordinary morality are ready to apply the same doctrine to matters of trade. 'Business is business' is a familiar maxim, which means—unless it is a meaningless tautology—that moral considerations do not apply in commercial life.

Most men of business make a compromise between the claims of conscience and the claims of the successful conduct of their trade or profession. They are in the helpless position of the lover who says:

> How happy could I be with either,
> Were t'other dear charmer away!

---

* If there were an Indian Mutiny to-day, we should be unable to raise a hand to stop it. This is what makes their attitude so splendid.

The task which conscience has to face is not to oscillate between conflicting claims, but to judge between conflicting theories, and, when moral judgment has spoken, to throw the sword of justice into the scale.

The first thing to recognise is that a non-moral theory of the State leads necessarily to a non-moral theory of trade; and if we have repudiated the former, conscience will not allow us to retain the latter. As Sidgwick says: 'If everything is permitted in national struggles for the sake of the nation, it will be easy to think that everything is permitted in party-struggles or class-struggles for the sake of the party or the class.'* And again: 'It seems to me that the deepest problems presented by war, and the deepest principles to be applied in dealing with them, are applicable also to the milder conflicts and collisions that arise within the limits of an orderly and peaceful community, and especially to those struggles for wealth and power carried on by classes and parties within a State. Indeed, these latter—though conducted by the milder methods of debate and vote—often resemble wars very strongly in the states of thought and feeling that they arouse, and also in the sort of difficulties that they suggest.'†

Since these words were written, in 1897,

* H. Sidgwick, *Practical Ethics*, p. 69.
† *Ibid.*, p. 87.

the methods of trade have become increasingly approximated to the methods of war. With the increase in the stress of industrial competition, the doctrine of 'necessity' and *væ victis* has been practically, if not theoretically, accepted even by men who in their private lives try to act on Christian principles. Hence a facing-both-ways and a halting between two opinions which paralyses conscience, and leads outsiders to level the charge of hypocrisy against those who profess the Christian religion.

The Christian conscience cannot rest in a divided allegiance. The State on its commercial side, if it is to be Christian, must carry on its business on the basis of *the idea of the family* rather than on the basis of a struggle for existence resulting in the survival of the strongest. In a well-ordered family the Christian ideal is actually realised. The strong protect and help the weak. Those members who can work feel a moral obligation to work. Their reward is not to have a larger share than others of the produce of their labour, but to share in the happiness of the home-group. Those who, through immaturity or sickness, can produce nothing are maintained—not as of charity, but as of right—by the combined resources of the family. The strong will even deny themselves that the weak may have needful 'luxuries.' Self-sacrifice is

not a dream or a profession, but, especially amongst the poor, a daily and hourly practice.

Now, the State is the aggregation of the families of the nation; 'the unit of the nation is the family.' If the family idea could be expanded to embrace the whole nation, it would seem that a Christian nation—a nation, that is, living and trading in harmony with Christian principles—might at last take its place in the world. Were this accomplished, the conscience would feel the removal of a weight 'heavy as death, and deep almost as life.'

Many thinkers, especially among the hand workers, where the pressure of the industrial system is most felt, seek in some form of State Socialism a deliverance from the antinomy under which we suffer. The theory is that unlimited competition must be restricted, and finally eliminated, in favour of a system of co-operation sanctioned and finally enforced by the State. In view of the present industrial individualism, and the widespread discontent with its results, such a 'consummation' would seem 'devoutly to be wished.' But State Socialism—even were its results as Utopian as its advocates surmise—finds itself confronted with an enormous difficulty. The system would have to be, not national, but *international*. A family can exist on a basis of co-operation, because the family is

a relatively closed circle. It is enclosed within a ring-fence into which the principle of economic competition is not allowed to enter. The breadwinner goes out into the competitive area, and wins by his efforts the means whereby the non-competitive life within the home-circle is sustained. If the State were Socialist, it would still have to face competition abroad. There is no ring-fence around a nation, unless a strong tariff might provide such a defence, and the only practical hope for a Socialist State would therefore depend on all States—or at least a powerful combination—adopting simultaneously a like basis.

Some restriction of the rights of unlimited competition is nevertheless imperatively demanded. The paramount claim of the moral law to be supreme even over economic conditions is not to be denied. The rigour of the competitive system increases, and is strangling the moral and religious life of the nation.

Every parish priest who is in touch with working men finds that uneasiness of conscience, in face of the usual conditions which regulate business, is—far more than unbelief—what keeps many from the public profession of religion. A parishioner said to me not long ago: 'I cannot be confirmed this year. I should like to be, but I should feel a hypocrite. In my private life I try to walk straight, but business is

full of dishonesty. That is what keeps many of us away from church. We are at least honest enough not to make professions on Sunday which we are bound to break on Monday. The law of business is competition; it is a race, where to succeed you must keep just ahead of your neighbour. The weakest goes to the wall or the workhouse. If a man looks aside from the main object—if he allows conscience or religion to interfere—he will be jostled aside or trampled on. This being so, it is best to make no professions. Conscience has a place in the home, but not in business.'

My friend stated the facts as he knew them. Doubtless there are facts which tell on the other side. Not all businesses are corrupt. If this were so, there would be no such thing as an honest piece of work; and it is work honest and thorough —in a word, conscientious work—which alone can keep a nation from collapse.

In certain callings, such as that of the agricultural labourer and the clergy, the stress of competition is little felt, except in its indirect effect of keeping down wages; but in our industrial centres of population the struggle increases in severity, and leads naturally to the preaching of the crudest sort of Socialism, which is simply individualism run wild—the selfish war of class against class. How can it be other-

wise? What we have to remember is that the demand is at bottom a just one—the desire for equality of opportunity; that, as Bentham said, 'every man shall count for one, and no man for more than one'; that no man shall be a mere cog in a competitive machine, which is indefinitely 'speeded up' by economic conditions; that every man is to be regarded as an end, and not a means, because man is essentially a personality.

Under feudal conditions this fact was acknowledged. 'In 1668,' wrote Dr. Gregory when Dean of S. Paul's, 'there were few, if any, large manufacturers, no extensive contractors; few, if any, great employers of labour. When this Cathedral was built, the authorities had to purchase their own material, to hire their own workmen, to send their own men to dig the stone in the Isle of Portland, to contract with barge-owners to convey the stone to London, and to provide for everything which had to be done, instead of leaving everything to be managed by a great building firm, as we should do nowadays. The consequence of this was that the work of the country was done by a great number of men who wrought with their own hands, had apprentices who lived in their houses, and some of whom might employ more or less regularly a few journeymen.' In a word, the idea of the guild, which is an

extension of the idea of the family group, was not dissociated from trade; the personal element counted for much; competition was limited by co-operation; the machine did not dominate the man.

Under present conditions all this is changed. The result is shown in the great combines, and trusts, and monopolies, which are characteristic of trade to-day.

Take the fishing industry. A company is formed whose only object is dividends. The responsibility of the shareholders is so widely diffused that it is felt by no one individually. Steam-trawlers take the place of the old fishing fleet. If the fishermen refuse to work for the new masters, they find their livelihood gone. If they submit, they have to accept the terms imposed by the conquerors—terms which in the interest of the combine tend to increase in severity. An independent and virile class becomes tributary. When a monopoly has been established, prices are raised; the combine controls the market; the public who provide the capital pay again in increased prices, while they enslave unwittingly a class of their fellow-citizens. Thus the vicious circle is complete.

Take another example. A trust or combine is assumed to be 'self-sufficient'; its one duty is to itself. It is engaged in manufacturing a certain article. If one employé knew how to make the article, he

might after a certain amount of experience set up in business for himself. Therefore it is the interest of those who control the machine that no man should know how to make more than one part of the article which is produced by the firm. The various departments, therefore, are not allowed to communicate with each other. If the attempt is made, the employé is dismissed. All communication between one department and another has to pass through the head-office. No man knows enough to be able to make anything completely; he becomes a wage-slave; he has been taught to make a part of a part of something which he does not understand; his knowledge is useless except under the conditions to which he is forced to submit. When he is forty years of age, and eye or hand cannot keep up the pace required, he is cast out and trodden under foot.

It has been said that 'this process of extinction and combination, which in Germany has resulted in establishing a monopoly in the gunpowder trade, and has all but attained the same thing here in England, is going on with the utmost rapidity in the matter of meat and milk and grocery, of boots and shoes, and clothes, and books, and printing, and railway travelling, and almost everything else. They are all going the same way.'*

* *Commerce and Christianity*, p. 56.

The theory that business is self-sufficing and non-moral is as destructive of the claims of conscience as the same theory applied to the State, and it leads to dishonest practices which are felt to be 'shady' even while being committed. One such practice is what is known as 'secret commissions,' where a firm gets custom by giving commissions to the servants of the well-to-do, which is simply bribery. Another more shady practice obtains in the shipping trade. When a ship comes into dock, damaged by a collision, for instance, a schedule of damages is made out to cover, not the actual damage, but many additional repairs also, which cheats the insurance company. The man who refuses to make out such a dishonest list finds that he is soon told he is 'not wanted.'

Again, in big shops, a sale is often advertised which is a mere trade dodge. Goods are displayed marked down to half-price. There is really no reduction. The goods are, perhaps, really worth the price asked, but the customers' love of a bargain is exploited, and the shop-assistants push the sale by steady lying. If they refuse, they are soon told: 'You are no good as a salesman.'

Then there is the system known as 'spiffs,' where the salesman gets a commission if he is successful in passing off last season's hats or collars as 'the very latest thing.'

Examples might be multiplied, but these suffice to show that a theory of business which tends to depress, where it does not succeed in suppressing, conscience, is destroying the nation's greatest assets: viz., its honour, integrity, and fidelity—on which finally even its credit depends. If conscience is to exercise the decisive influence which is its right, Christian people must first feel the stings of conscience. We must 'acknowledge and bewail our manifold sins and wickedness, which we, from time to time, most grievously have committed.' We must feel 'the remembrance of them grievous unto us,' and 'the burden intolerable.' An intolerable thing — however irrefragable it may seem to be, regarded theoretically—will not last indefinitely.

If, as we believe, the non-moral theory of the State is visibly breaking down, the non-moral theory of trade must follow it into the limbo of exploded superstitions. We must begin by claiming for the Christian conscience the ultimate authority to rule social practice, and we must be ready to suffer, if need be, for conscience' sake. It is those who 'take up the cross' who carry it to victory.

SUMMARY OF THE ARGUMENT

INTRODUCTORY (PAGES v, vi).

FROM Jeremy Taylor (1660) to Butler (1726) no serious attempt was made to propound a theory of conscience—what it is, and what is its authority. Since Butler, what has been written is scattered throughout the writings of, *e.g.*, T. H. Green, Martineau, H. Sidgwick, T. Fowler, Bishop d'Arcy, William James, etc. The general reader wants a coherent view: which this Essay attempts—however inadequately—to provide. Conscience is practically the most important part of Ethics, which demands a metaphysic and a theology.

CHAPTER I. (PAGES 1–10).

Morality has been regarded as sacrosanct, because of its high social value. Its claims have been, therefore, unchallenged. Such is no longer the case. Ethics, if it is to maintain its authority, must rest more, and not less, in the future, on the religious sanctions for conduct. Examples from Education, etc.

CHAPTER II. (PAGES 11–22).

The facts of life show that conscience has a great, if undefined, authority. It gives the main interest to the Drama, which is the mirror of life. This is illustrated from Sophocles—with whom compare Plato—the dramatic narratives of the Old Testament, and the tragedies of Shakespeare. Our own experience teaches us the same lesson.

CHAPTER III. (Pages 23–35).

The 'naturalistic' theory of the conscience only 'explains' it by abolishing its authority, and even its significance. Its supposed origin being unethical, the supposed obligation to obey its dictates is discredited. The possession of a conscience is a weakness, which militates against success in the struggle for existence. The man of the future will do well to get rid of a useless encumbrance.

But the type thus evolved would not be *human;* it would be bestial or diabolic. Therefore the naturalistic theory leads to an *impasse,* which Spencerian ethics seeks to avoid by arguing that the moral is evolving by a natural process from the non-moral. His optimism and faith in industrialism mislead him. We cannot get out of the evolutionary process what was not at least implicitly contained in it from the beginning.

CHAPTER IV. (Pages 36–47).

Naturalism is discredited, as its 'inability to guide life' (Eucken) is recognised. We must 'return to the problem of an independent spiritual life.' Bergson claims that philosophy 'shows us the life of the spirit in relation to that of the body.' While philosophy may possibly (by Intuition) explain the spiritual life, that life must *reside* in *personality,* not in any theory or doctrine. Conscience can be nothing less than our whole personality manifesting itself as ethical impulse.

Personality is 'supernatural' in the sense that it is essentially a spiritual, not a material thing. A spiritual interpretation of man and the cosmos is coming to be a necessity of thought, especially in view of the new theory of matter, which approximates to the later Idealism of Berkeley.

Personality is (1) spiritual, (2) a unity, or rather a unit, (3) does not act in a void; it implies an en-

vironment. Conscience, therefore—which is the personality acting ethically, not a mere 'faculty' of our nature—can only be understood in the light of a theory of personality.

CHAPTER V. (Pages 48–59).

Definitions of conscience collected from various authors: S. Bernard, Whewell, South, Locke, Jeremy Taylor, Charnock, Saurin, Swift, Butler, Adam Smith, Martensen, T. H. Green, Sidgwick, Martineau, D'Arcy, Dewey, Bradlaugh, Bain, Darwin, Rashdall, Gore.

CHAPTER VI. (Pages 60–69).

Butler's, Martineau's, and Green's definitions considered. Provisional statement: Conscience is the reaction, pleasurable or painful, of the whole personality, in response to a human or Divine standard.

CHAPTER VII. (Pages 70–76).

If conscience is a vital impulse springing from personality—not a separate 'faculty'—it cannot *ex hypothesi* claim infallibility. Examples of fallibility of conscience. Reasons suggested why this should be so; the *effort to achieve* a standard of conduct, not the standard considered as fixed, is of lasting value.

CHAPTER VIII. (Pages 77–91).

The postulate of conscience is faith in the moral order of the universe. This postulate is ultimately religious and theological. The attempt to consider Ethics apart from such considerations unsatisfactory. Professor Fowler's view considered and rejected. Agnostic and Theistic Ethics compared.

CHAPTER IX. (PAGES 92–103).

We are so constituted as to believe that the universe is *trustworthy:* this is faith rather than logical inference. Mr. Balfour's and M. Bergson's contributions to this subject; also A. C. Fraser. This faith demands GOD as its justification, as Martensen maintains. Thus duty, responsibility, and judgment, acquire a meaning. Conscience not the cause, but the occasion, of the moral law.

CHAPTER X. (PAGES 104–116).

The function of conscience in the world is to lead the individual to serve society when self-interest conflicts with social welfare. Altruism or self-sacrifice received an immense impetus from Christianity. The development of conscience in response to sanctions recognised as of Divine authority has been the prime factor in Western civilisation, as pointed out by B. Kidd in 1895.

CHAPTER XI. (PAGES 117–124).

When we see a standard of conduct, and approve it, the sense of obligation arises. Professor Dewey's explanation of the meaning of obligation very similar to that of M. Bergson. 'Custom' and 'association' are inadequate as an explanation of ethical obligation, which requires a standard which abides.

CHAPTER XII. (PAGES 125–139).

Conscience in the New Testament: Our LORD'S teaching; S. Paul; the Epistle to the Hebrews; S. Peter.

CHAPTER XIII. (PAGES 140–151).

Conscience and the Church. The meaning of the word 'Church' in the New Testament, and the sense in which it is here used, defined. 'Public opinion'

and the 'social conscience.' The Church 'a Society within society.' Ethical import of this theory. Value of the Church in supporting the conscience.

CHAPTER XIV. (PAGES 152–159).

The Church's appeal to the conscience based on a certain view of Personality—Divine and human. This finds expression in the doctrines of Sin and Grace, which are essential to Catholic Theology.

CHAPTER XV. (PAGES 160–168).

Conscience and the Sacraments: the effect of grace upon the Baptised and Communicant. Does the Eucharist enlighten the conscience?

CHAPTER XVI. (PAGES 169–181).

Conscience and CHRIST. The incorporation into CHRIST must precede the imitation of CHRIST. The weakness of Protestant theology. The sinlessness and holiness of CHRIST. The value of an Ideal, which has been actually exhibited in the Perfect Man.

CHAPTER XVII. (PAGES 182–194).

Objections to the Church theory of Grace considered. They lose their force when we realise the scope of the work of the HOLY SPIRIT, which is world-wide. His witness in the human conscience. The method of the Divine Election of nations suggests an Ecclesia not limited by nationality. Conscience invigorated by relying on the HOLY SPIRIT as the Source of spiritual power. This the method of the *Catecheses* of Cyril of Jerusalem.

CHAPTER XVIII. (PAGES 195–203).

Conscience develops *pari passu* with personality. The operation of the HOLY SPIRIT in the development of conscience conspicuous in condemning (1) un-

natural crimes, (2) infanticide, (3) slavery, (4) persecution, (5) suicide, (6) divorce, (7) unjust economic conditions.

CHAPTER XIX. (Pages 204–216).

The revolt of conscience against the doctrine that might is right illustrated by the European War now being waged. The doctrines of Naturalism and Determinism—which may be summed up as the doctrine of Necessity—now upon their trial. Conscience, assumed to be non-existent or negligible, is showing itself to be a spiritual force of the first order. What may be called a ' world conscience ' is awakening.

CHAPTER XX. (Pages 217–229).

The theory that ' the State is non-moral ' is, if accepted, subversive of conscience. This theory steadily developed in recent years. H. Sidgwick's forecast, in 1897, verified. Need for the moralisation of politics—(1) civil, (2) ecclesiastical. If the antinomy at present existing is to be resolved, the individual conscience must exhibit a higher principle of morality than at present prevails in the State. Need of honesty and veracity.

CHAPTER XXI. (Pages 230–241).

The theory that business is not concerned with morals is part of the theory of the non-moral State, and is equally condemned by conscience. The idea of the family, rather than that of a competitive struggle carried on by the methods of war, approves itself to the conscience. The movement towards a Socialistic State; its strength and its weakness. Practical problems of conscience in relation to trade.

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN
FOR WELLS GARDNER, DARTON AND CO., LTD., LONDON, E.C.

DATE DUE

FEB 10			
JUL 13			
APR 12			
JY 17 '85			

BJ
1471
R522
1915

11532

Richardson
Conscience: its origin and authority

DEMCO

THE KING'S LIBRARY
3000173375